Transgender TAPESTRY

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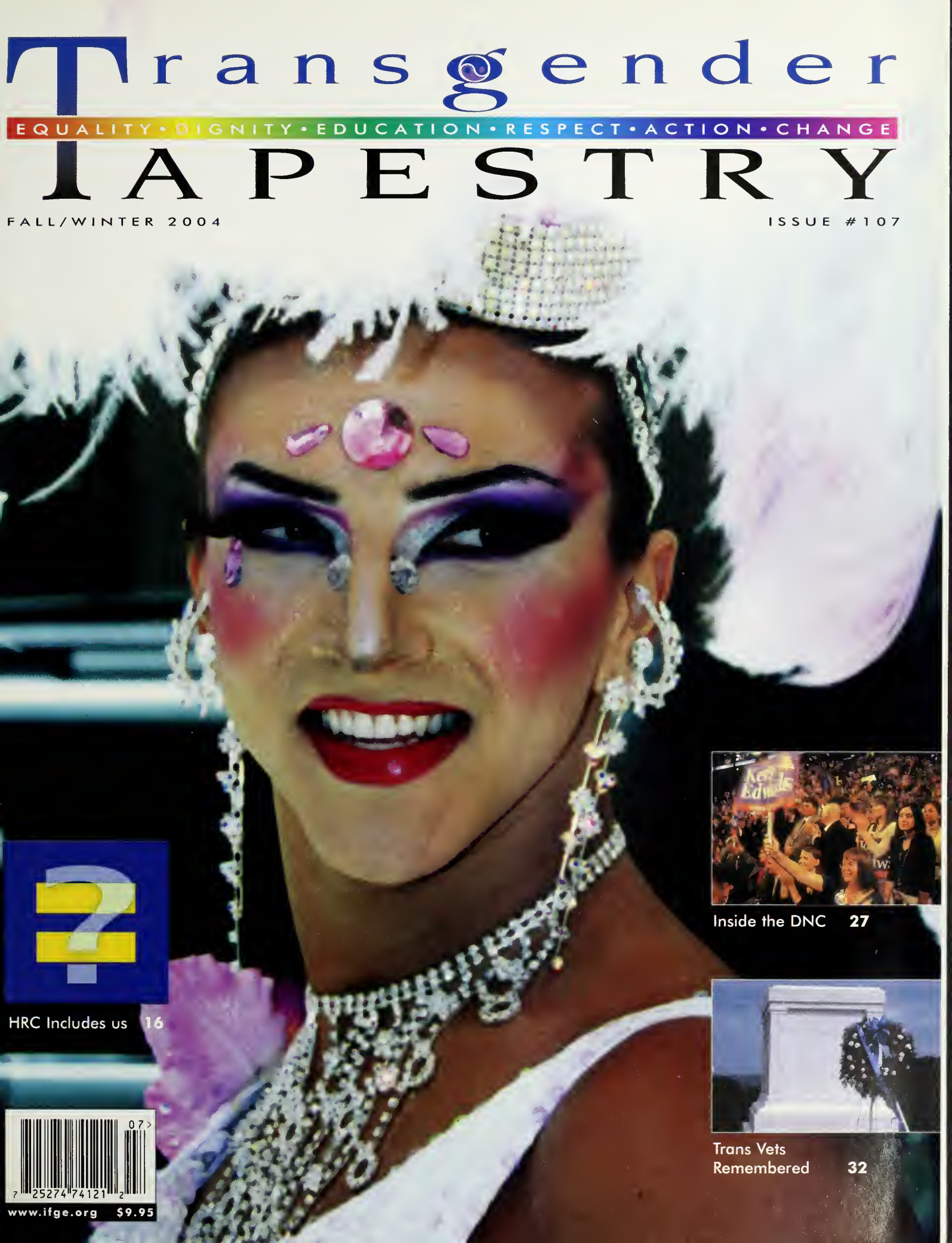
FALL/WINTER 2004

ISSUE #107



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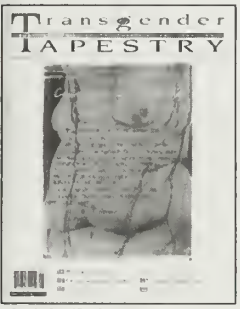

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Visit our website for up-to-date information on conference, events, and media appearances.

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The Journal of the International Foundation for Gender Education

On the Cover
One of the fierce beauties of the Imperial Court of New York. Taken at New York City's 2004 Pride Parade. Contributed by one of our readers—photographer Robin Halmes.

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Guidelines For Contributors

Transgender Tapestry is a magazine for and about crossdressers, transgendered, transsexual, intersexed, and other gender-variant persons, and those who support them.

Our Readers

Write for a general audience. Our readers include closeted and out people: crossdressers, transsexuals, transgenderists, intersexed persons, gay men, lesbians, bisexuals, heterosexuals, therapists, physicians, ministers, spouses and significant others, family members, and friends. Our readers span all ages, races, nationalities, religions, spiritualities, beliefs and opinions, and educational backgrounds. Your piece may be targeted for one group, but it should speak to the larger readership.

We want writing that challenges categories, presumptions, and accepted thought.

How To Submit

The best way to send materials is via e-mail. We get it immediately and we don't have to retype it.

Send your submissions to: editor@ifge.org. Attach a file, using MIME encoding. These formats are acceptable for text files: Microsoft Word, WordPerfect, Rich Text Files (RTF), and Text. Please name your file so it makes sense to us, and for goodness sakes, be sure to include your name and contact information with text files. A file named "Tapestry" doesn't tell us much! Much better to use "John Smith Poem" or "Martha Michaelson Submission."

It's okay to send text in the body of an e-mail, but our Eudora Light mail reader doesn't recognize embedded codes.

Graphic images should be high-resolution TIFF or EPS format, saved at 300dpi and submitted to the editor (address below) on Zip disk or CD-R. Please include your return address if you would like your materials returned to you. If you prefer to send images in BMP, GIF, or JPG format—although they are easy to send via e-mail, please know the quality of your image will be severely compromised by the printing process.

Unless they're self-extracting, please don't send zipped files without clearing it with us beforehand. No e-mail? Send a PC-compatible or MAC floppy to Dallas Denny, P.O. Box 33724, Decatur, GA 30033-0724.

We hate typing in text, but we understand some people can't afford or don't like computers, so believe it or not, we accept articles on paper. Please include a brief biography with your submission.

What To Send Us

We want original material. We rarely accept simultaneous or previously published submissions. We're interested in ideas which have been previously under-explored. We accept submissions on gender issues of general interest, including: new (for some people) types of diversity; little-known information about transgender history; under-utilized resources and populations; personal struggles; social or medical issues; humor with an underlying message; and satire.

Things We Shouldn't Have To Say

DO send us stuff. Deadlines are firm. Contact us before submitting. Talk with us before writing, if possible. Let us know what you want to do and when you can deliver it. Send us a rough draft if you have one. Be reliable. Make your word stick. Be concise. Don't ramble, and don't try to tackle too much in one article.

Don't be heartbroken if we don't use your submission. A rejection often has more to do with the theme or the space available in the magazine than the quality of the writing.

My Female Brain

If my brain is female, it doesn't know it. In the best male tradition, it unerringly finds its way through the maze of streets of Metropolitan Atlanta. It's not a particularly emotional brain, either; it accepts pain, disappointment, and good fortune with equal stoicism. Nor is it as maternal as most female brains are rumored to be. It likes babies, but doesn't melt down when it sees one.

Now, I'm not saying it's the most masculine brain in the world. It clearly isn't. It doesn't get the competition thing. It can't understand why there must always be winners and losers, and is always on the lookout for the win-win; it has little interest, therefore, in watching sports. Its communication patterns and interpersonal skills seem to follow the female pattern more closely than the male. It is not, however, particularly interested in female-oriented things like dolls or playing house or chintz curtains, and never has been.

I often hear or read claims made by transsexuals: "I have a female brain"

(MTFs). "I have a male brain" (FTMs). No doubt they believe they do, but in most cases I just don't see it. What I see more often than not is natal gender-typical patterns of behavior, problem-solving, and communicating. FTMs are more likely to have high levels of empathy, understand the complexities of social situations, and have difficulty in competitive situations. MTFs tend to be practiced at interrupting, establishing dominance, and responding to life as a problem to be solved (and nowhere is this more obvious than in their handling of transition, which these brains tend to look at not as a process, as a "female" brain would be apt to do, but as a series of obstacles to be wrestled to the ground and stomped).

Research has in fact shown a tie-in between the degree of masculinization of a brain and gender-typed behavior and identity—but crossdressers, and even most transsexuals, no doubt myself included, show every indication of having brains that are fairly typical of our natal sex. Maybe it's time for us to quit claiming we have female brains or male brains and just be honest—we identify as members of the non-natal sex. We have every right to do so. Let's stop using our brains as justification.

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OPPS...

At the request of Mr. Stone, this column has not had an editor's red pencil put to it.

A word from the Chair of the IFGE Board of Directors, Moonhawk River Stone

One can only do one's best and then one must accept the constraining consequences of the unpredictable. This issue of *Transgender Tapestry* was to be in your hands in late September. That would have been plenty of time for you, the readership to join with me in anticipating a wonderful inaugural Intersex Awareness Day on October 26, 2004. The summer fundraising doldrums struck IFGE this summer like the hurricanes marched through Florida, leaving in its wake difficult decisions, one of which was to delay publication of issue #107.

My sincere apologies to you the reader. However, I owe a deeper apology to the many wonderful intersex writers who were to grace the pages of #107 in acknowledgment and celebration of Intersex Awareness Day. That special issue will be forthcoming to you by year's end in *Transgender Tapestry* #108. Along with those works will be commentary and feedback about people's experience of the 1st annual Intersex Awareness Day.

Meanwhile, my original column, of course, has had to be edited and adjusted for the vagaries of the summer's shortages. Thanks for waiting...thanks for you patience. I hope you'll agree we've delivered once again an issue that's informative, thought-provoking and entertaining.

Intersections

Last month intersex activists and their allies around the country—and the world—celebrated the first (and hopefully, annual) Intersex Awareness Day on October 26th, ten years to day of "the first public demonstration by intersexuals in modern history." (Max Beck, *Chrysalis*, vol. 2, no. 5, p. 45, 1997). This was an exciting important day of action on behalf of intersex people and will usher in a new era in activism. For more information on this initiative, and events which happened, please see their website: www.intersex-awareness-day.org. I hope that some readers were able to attend an event in your local community.

Part of this day of action was to revisit the original object of the first demonstration: the annual meeting of the American Academy of Pediatricians. The 1994 was held in Boston. This year's will be in San Francisco and though happening a few weeks before the 26th, activists are planning a "warm" reception for the pediatricians. We will have a report for you on this action in issue #108.

Public awareness of intersex people has grown steadily in the past 10 years. Cheryl Chase founded the Intersex Society of North America (www.isna.org) in 1993. Emi Koyama, who worked as an intern, then as a staffer with ISNA for a while, now heads up Intersex Initiative (www.intersexinitiative.org) in Portland, Oregon. Betsy Driver and Janet Green founded Bodies Like Ours in January 2002. (www.bodieslikeours.org). Over the past 11 years many intersex people such as Mani Bruce Mitchell, David Vandertie, Raven Kaldera, Angela Moreno, Morgan Holmes, Martha Coventry, Max Beck, and many others have stepped forward to activism to help end secrecy, shame, isolation and unnecessary surgery on infants. They have been joined by allies in the medical and human service fields as well as the LGBT community and other allies. Videos have been produced and are widely available. Activists have made educational materials both affordable and often times, free. Visit the above websites for how to obtain them. If you can, donate copies of them to your local schools and libraries.

In Memorium

David Reimer, August 22, 1965—May 5, 2004

By the time you read this David Reimer's death will, perhaps, be old news. Though I wonder how such a tragedy could ever be, old news.

When the news of David Reimer's death by suicide came across my computer screen early that morning a few days later, like John Colapinto I was "shocked, but not surprised." I was angry, too. Damn angry, that David never got to be who he was, despite spending an entire life struggling to be that man. Angry that in the name of Science and in the name of one man's arrogant, grandiose reputation that David and his entire family were made the subject of a medical experiment gone horribly awry. Learning of David's death was a moment of scathing impotence. The past could not be changed and the future would never happen. When David took his life that early May morning, he may have ended his terrible suffering, but he obliterated all hope that this experiment gone horribly wrong would ultimately have a victorious outcome.

Who was David Reimer? If the reader is connected to the popular media of the *Rolling Stone* and the multitude of endless talk/news shows, David was the subject of John Colapinto's December 1997 *Rolling Stone* article in which he dropped his anonymity and came forth as the subject of the famous John/Joan case, the boy who was raised as a girl. Later Colapinto published a book, *As Nature Made Him* (Harper Collins, 2000) which drew much critical acclaim and the subsequent media attention as it detailed the story of David's childhood, his family and his emergence into adulthood.

Colapinto's book also exposed the work of Dr. John Money for the fraud that it was. Colapinto could take a stronger stand vis-à-vis Money than the earlier paper by Milton Diamond and Keith Sigmundson published in March 1997 in the *Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine* which detailed the failure of Money's John/Joan experiment. This paper was published at considerable professional risk to the authors because, especially Sigmundson, were quite fearful of Money and Money's penchant for flinging innuendo and groundless accusation around. Money in his professional position in the scientific community as a leader in the study of sex and gender garnered him considerable power which he wielded with impunity.

So what exactly happened? In 1951, John Money published his Ph.D. dissertation on research which compellingly supported that idea that gender identity is innate—that we are born with our gender identity, we do not develop it as we grow up. In the nature vs. nurture argument, this was research solidly on the nature side. In the late 1990s and early 2000s a couple of other studies, not to mention thousands of transsexuals and intersex people's first person accounts have supported the nature part of the argument. This proof is pretty conclusive at this point, too.

By the time the Reimer identical twins, David and Brian, were born in 1965, Money had completely—without explanation—reversed his thinking. He proposed that it was all nurture—not nature—which made one's gender identity. Girls and boys are made, not born. This idea—and the experiment on David Reimer—became an integral basis for the theory underlying the first wave of feminism, taking us all on a long and diverted journey in understanding gender identity and gender expression in humans from which we are still recovering. This idea also became the basis for the medicalization of the treatment of intersex babies—with unnecessary surgeries and genital mutilations being performed in the name of "normalcy". Dr. Milton Diamond when uncovering Money's fraud, became one of the leading medical advocates for the intersex movement.

So what happened to the Reimer family? I would recommend reading Colapinto's book for the full story. The identical twin boys were born to poor parents just out of adolescence themselves and poorly equipped emotionally or psychologically to cope with the medical system. The nine month old boys needed to have circumcisions because their foreskins were restricting their ability to urinate. David was the first twin to be operated on and the circumcision was botched and instead both his foreskin and penis were removed. Brian was then not operated on and his urinary function recovered fully as he grew up. The parents sought relief far and wide for their child and out of desperation happened upon Johns Hopkins and John Money who confidently assured them he would successfully make David into Brenda, and so David was medically reassigned female.

It was evident from as early as two years old that the experiment was not working and Brenda (David) was not happy being female. She was depressed, distressed and insisting in doing things typically male. The family regularly journeyed from Canada to America to visit Money for follow ups. Money persisted, blaming the parents for not doing things right. The details of those visits in Colapinto's book are chilling narratives of a professional out of control and inappropriately sexualizing the twin children. Things got worse, much worse. The experiment blew the family apart—the father became alcoholic, the mother so clinically depressed she was hospitalized at times, and Brian, the other twin was lost the glare of the focus on Brenda (David). Brenda's problems escalated and intensified over time placing further stress on the family system, and eventually at 14 years old she began a reversal of the infant reassignment to female became David once again. I am equally outraged by what David suffered as by the irrevocable effects this experiment had on David's family.

Meanwhile Money had for years been publishing professionally what a success the experiment on David/Brenda, (now called for confidentiality's sake John/Joan) was. But suddenly in the late 1970s without explanation, he stopped publishing on the experiment, but continued to claim it as a success. Since the publication of Diamond's and Sigmundson's paper in early 1997 right on through the media attention the book wrought, Money has never publicly commented on any part of this experiment. He continues, however, to enjoy the respect and honor of many of his colleagues, and significant professional societies still hold him in esteem. The scientific equivalent of circling the wagons. Shame on him—and shame on them.

By David's own words he felt tortured and crazy all his childhood, felt a "weirdo." Somehow both he and his family endured through this, though not without further tragedy. His twin brother, Brian, died of a drug overdose just two years ago. David did marry, did have a family and did work of which he was proud. He was proudest of stepping forward and telling his story to the world. But David and Brian also come from a family in which biologically based depression is quite strong. As Colapinto states we will never know "how much of the Reimers' misery was due to inherited depression, and how much to the nightmare circumstances into which they had been thrown."

I am heartened that Peter Jackson (lately of "The Lord Of The Rings" trilogy) has purchased the rights to Colapinto's book, *As Nature Made Him.* and Dreamworks is developing a screenplay. My only hope would be that any movie would be true to the tragedy of David and his family and not avoid the harsh truth of what really happened.

But the unavoidable reality is that some will continue to do harm to others in the name of Science, and in the name of personal gain and aggrandizement until the end of Knowledge. What needs to change is when we screw up, we need to own it fully, make amends and learn from the harm done and beg the forgiveness of the harmed. We've got our work cut out for us. That hasn't happened yet for the Reimer family. And it probably won't ever happen for them. May it comfort the family to know there are many today working who are much more vigilant, asking and demanding better of Science and its practitioners. There are many who will always remember David Reimer and the humbling lessons he brought us.

May David rest in peace. May Brian rest in peace. May their family, friends and loved ones be comforted to know others care. For the rest of us—we have a lot of work to do in memory of David Reimer. Until next time....

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Hawk Stone can be reached at:
HawkStoneIFGE@aol.com

Author's note: My source for this article, besides Colapinto's book, and my personal conversations with Milton Diamond is Colapinto's 6/3/04 internet article, "Gender Gap: What were the real reasons behind David Reimer's suicide?"
http://slate.msn.com/id/2101678

Tran-Mail

Omnigender? Or "Justice for Just Us?"

Thank you for reviewing my book, *Omnigender*, in your magazine. It is unfortunate, however, that the reviewer did not provide his social location. I was open in my book about my social location as an elderly transgender lesbian, but one must guess as to whether David Gillespie is a heterosexual crossdresser or what else his connection might be to the IFGE community. Social location is particularly important here because Gillespie faults my book for its basic thesis (that the binary gender construct includes sexuality as well as gender; indeed, that gender and sex cannot be neatly differentiated, a point I proved with a considerable amount of scientific, psychological, and anthropological evidence). It is laughable to claim, as Gillespie does, that prohibiting "non-reproductive sex" is not a question of gender, when the main point of the prohibition is to outlaw homosexual activity and thus to render male-female relations mandatory.

Whatever his own sexual orientation might be, Gillespie reveals his heterosexism when he faults me for not detailing the arguments of antigay authors in a book that seeks gender/sexual liberation for everyone. Gillespie would not be a contributing editor for your journal were he not seeking justice for some members of the transgender community; but the point of *Omnigender* is that we cannot rationally seek justice for some of us without seeking justice for all of us. As a Christian and a human being, I am as upset when a crossdresser or transsexual is attacked in the streets as I am when a gay male or lesbian is attacked. The attacker makes no distinctions between gender expression, sexual orientation, and gender identity—and we had better not make them either. In *Omnigender*, I took issue with certain gay and lesbian leaders who want to repudiate or ignore transgender issues for fear of slowing down their social progress.

I agree with Milton Diamond that "disparaging any group harms [us] all." Or, as Ben Franklin put it in another context, "We must all hang together or assuredly we will all hang separately."

So the Big Question is, will we do lateral damage to one another by seeking "justice for just us _____?" Fill in the blank: justice for just us crossdressers? For just us homosexuals? For just us transsexuals? Just us whoever else? OR will we seek justice for everyone, seeking not only omnigender (i.e., across-the-spectrum gender and sexual justice), but also racial, economic, age-related, and ability-related justice, as your "loocifer" editorialist so skillfully argued. I have taken my stand for all-inclusive justice and I wish Gillespie had been more candid and less devious about his desire to exclude same-sex oriented people from the acceptance and privilege he would like for people of his own stripe.

—Virginia R. Mollenkott, Ph.D. ✉

Gillespie's Response:

Professor Mollenkott has raised four issues in her response to my review of her book, Omnigender *(*Tapestry*, #102) to which I would like to speak. Three of these have to do with me personally, only one with my critique of her work.*

Those three personal issues related to what she calls my social location, to what my connection to the IFGE community might be, and to my alleged heterosexism. Mollenkott says she wishes I had been more candid and less devious.

I am a gay male. I also served for three years as a Presbyterian minister and was trained in classical reformed theology and in philosophy in both undergraduate and graduate schools. I am not a hetero-crossdresser, nor am I a pre- or postoperative transsexual. I do, however, have a Transsexual Menace t-shirt and my dearest friend used to be Carleton, but now is Carla.

My connection to the gender community, one which is long-term and deep and which I treasure, came through my best friend with whom I grew up, an inactive Presbyterian minister now living in Asheville, North Carolina—my dear Carla Pridgen. Through Carla, I developed relationships with Rev. Erin Swenson (another trannie Presbyterian minister), Holly Boswell of the Phoenix Group in Asheville, Dallas Denny of this journal, and Terry Murphy of the Southern Comfort conference. I have even been a presenter at Southern Comfort. So yes, I guess you could say I'm connected.

As to my thoughts that the discussion of gender expression might better be conducted apart from that of sexual attraction/activity, two good cases in point are the ecclesiastical trials of Ms. Pridgen and Dr. Swenson. In both cases, an effort was made by church courts to confuse the issues and thereby bar these two transsexual women from church service on the basis of the Church's constitutional ban on homosexual ordination. It was argued, necessarily and successfully, that they were two separate issues: one, forbidden by the Book of Order, the other not spoken to at all.

It has been my experience that at least in church circles, each issue produces an entirely different reaction on the part of the average church member.

As to the Old Testament proscriptions, I will gladly agree that there was an effort on the part of ancient Jews to preserve a binary gender construction. However, in terms of sexual behavior, there was one point I was trying to make: the nomadic Jews needed to grow numerically in order to establish themselves as a entity in the Middle East. Babies were needed. Hence, multiple wives/partners were permitted. Non-reproductive sex, on the other hand, (even straight non-reproductive sex) was forbidden. In terms of gender expression, the only concern of the ancient Hebrews was that biological distinctions in anatomy underscored the role of the one who did the penetrating and the one who was penetrated. Hence, sexual activity of any kind must correspond to the created order. To be penetrated, was indeed to "act like a woman."

Professor Mollenkott, I am not devious, nor am I heterosexist. I only offered my

thoughts regarding your book, which I stated was a welcome and helpful addition to the literature, in an effort to see all people, including radical right Christians, elderly transgendered women, or gay persons like myself treated with the respect, dignity and justice they deserve. On how we do that, apparently we respectfully disagree.

—David R. Gillespie
SCupstatewriter@aol.com

Transgender Art

This inquiry concerns the photo/art illustration, page 41 of *Tapestry* issue #105, that accompanied an essay entitled "T Girl in a Queer World" written by Melissa Clark. I noticed there was no credit information regarding the artist. Did the artist wish to remain anonymous, or was this omission merely an editorial oversight?

If the artist wishes to remain unidentified, I will respect their decision to do so. I would like to extend my heartfelt and sincere compliments; as one transgendered artist to another, well done. The artwork touched, "grabbed" me on an emotional and creative level that I would be hard pressed to put into words.

Is it my imagination, or is there a significant absence of transgender graphic art in the publishing field? Transgendered writers, essayists, poets, *et al.* seem to have been more than adequately represented in various GLBT publications and venues.

Where are the transgendered graphic artists, and sculptors? Who are they? What are they doing? Are there any organizations, collaboratives, cooperatives that are devoted to transgendered artists? The seeming rarity of these individuals and groups constitutes a void to me that is every bit as depressing and oppressive as the "closet" itself. Perhaps I've been looking in all the wrong places. Hopefully you might be able to shed some direction or advice as to how to connect with my peers. I would appreciate any and all assistance in this endeavor.

—Dennis R. Wall, aka Moe Honey ✉

Art Director Dave Bryant writes:

Thanks for the inquiry—glad to hear you enjoyed the artwork. The art came from a "copy right free" collection I sometimes buy art from on the Internet (www.arttoday.com). Sorry, I don't have any more informaion than that. And yes, there is a shortage of transgender art and images out there. I don't know of any agencies or organizations. Sounds like an opportunity waiting to happen...

Of course we'd love to see what our readers may have to contribute to the publication... that's why it's called Tapestry!

Civil Disobediance

I started the process of coming out because of articles in *Tapestry*. I got my first copy at a newsstand; the rest of the room was porn!

One of the stumbling points for me coming out is a lack of accurate knowledge about transsexuality and the growing transgender movement. Another stumbling point was being raised as a conservative Christian. Several of the articles that had major impact on me concerned different religions and countries that accept in part or in whole transgendered persons because of their belief in gods and goddesses or some form of the Great Spirit.

I feel that until the majority of Americans have a change in their religious beliefs to a religion or religions that supports God and Goddess on equal terms, there will be no nationwide chance for full civil rights for transgendered persons.

I know there will be some who disagree with me, like the local MCC minister, who is a transwoman. I attend a Unitarian Universalist Welcoming Fellowship that has a woman as their reverend. She, like others members of the fellowship, have been welcoming to me and supportive—but most of the time, the Reverend's sermons use the term God.

I found my place of balanced spirituality in the womens' ritual group that meets at the fellowship. Our rituals are earth and goddess centered.

I would like to point out that Mahatma Gandhi used the power of mass numbers of people breaking a British law that said only the British could make and sell sea salt; this showed the British they had lost power over India. The British overcharged the Indian popular for this life-supporting product So Gandhi got a million people to walk through British military lines to make their own salt. Gandhi got away with his actions because of the decline of British economic and military power after British shipping losses in WWII.

Martin Luther King, Jr. used the power of boycott to prove the economic power of African-Americans on white-controlled businesses and the power of large number of marching African-Americans over small white police departments. Neither action is truly 100% non-violent. These actions are more like civil disobedience.

—Ellen Betty Wyatt ✉
ellenbetty@comcast.net

Poetry

by Tim Peterson

These poems are from Tim's work *Trans Figures.*

Building blocks: a house, tall with two bedrooms, a patrician car, a tie, the pet on the leash: imagined, then real, these things that make it who and then what?

Designs for travel, whorl of others, scenes on the diving board, toenails painted sometimes, its body starts barging in, narrowing the options: wide shoulders, lift them wide, up, chest out: its voice a basso profundo: jerking gesture, the edge of a collar, square, neck thick, turning into its opposite, walk from the shoulders, motions that swing back into the frame like invisible boxes, close the lid.

A large thug throws his arm around its waist, hand clamped over one butt cheek. The voice shifts a little, to shake him loose but he grins wider, says "We like to have some fun around here, no rules." This becomes true for him, but the voice knows that somehow it's been shafted. The large thug looks like a gorilla in lipstick. The voice at this moment is simply a body to be fucked and thrown away. That grip, no mobility.

It lives alone. It doesn't want to be seen by others, but then it wants to be seen. Sometimes it's driving in a car late at night through dim streets, fingers nailpolished along the edge on the wheel, gripping the wheel that seems bigger this way, seems overwhelming. The motion of the leg giving the gas comes from the hip, not the ankle. The voice is not built like other bodies that do this, driving around at night. Sometimes it's stopped at a red light, and the people in the next car are gaping at it, laughing at its feeble effort to materialize, some parts in the wrong order, or proportion. Sometimes the car in the next lane slows down, because it saw something unusual. The voice is very conscious of efforts to pass this trial, tries on gestures that will get it overlooked, a gentle throwing back of the hair it saw someone do who was a real body, a bending forward in the seat so it will seem, for an instant, like that someone is living in its skin.

Tim Peterson's *chopbook Cumulus wos recently published by Portoble Press ot Yo-Yo Labs. His poetry ond criticism hove appeored or ore forthcoming in Antennoe, can we hove our boll bock?, Colorodo Review, ond Roin Taxi. Tim won on honoroble mention for the Robert Penn Worren Awords in 2001, a contest judged thot yeor by John Ashbery.*

Obituaries

You'll also find a memorium to David Reimer by Moonhawk River Stone on page 6—Ed.

Divinity/John Greene

No photo available

Transgender activist Divinity, also known as John Greene, died on 25 May of septicemia secondary to Hepatitis B. She was 63 years old. Divinity, who had previously lived in California and Arizona, lived in Greensboro, NC. For some ten years, she published *All The Beautiful People*, the newsletter of the Carolina Transexual Alliance, a networking group which she founded. According to Southern Comfort board member Holly Boswell, Divinity was Chair of the SCC conference in 1994. She had written for *Transgender Tapestry.*

Divinity was perhaps best known for a long-running feud with Tri-Ess' Charlotte chapter, Kappa Beta, members of which, she was happy to tell anyone who would listen, once took offense at her attire.

According to the newspaper *Q-Notes*, Greene is survived by her mother, stepfather, a son in Seattle, and two brothers in Arizona. Her ashes were sent to her family in Arizona.

Doug/Donna Nadeau

Former IFGE Board member Doug Nadeau, known in the transgender community as Donna, passed away on April 23, 2004 as a result of parkinson's disease.

Nadeau was a regular at transgender conventions, despite a movement condition similar to Parkinson's Syndrome. In a 1998 television interview, she attributed her coming out as a crossdresser to changes in her social behavior incurred as a side effect of a 1995 brain operation to reduce her involuntary motor movements.

Nadeau a graduate of Princeton University, was active as an alumnus; she was also a graduate of Harvard Law School. She is survived by her wife, Lynn, and sons Greg and Ted.

This ... is dedicated to the memory of a male-to-female transsexual who was murdered and whose murderer was not severely punished because people don't really consider it to be such a bad thing to kill somebody who was crossdressed or transgendered and that attitude about people who are of that persuasion are not worthy of consideration and fair treatment has got to be stopped.

—Donna Nadeau, 1998 (from a videotaped interview)

Memories of Divinity and a Memory of Donna

by Dallas Denny

Perhaps my most poignant memory of Divinity is from one of the earlier Southern Comforts. New-queen-on-the-scene but already notorious Riki Anne Wilchins was rumored to be coming to the conference. Divinity, who was working

security that year, and who, bristling with walkie-talkies and clipboard, resembled nothing so much as an officious good-old-boy deputy in a short skirt and blonde wig, was demanding that Wilchins be physically removed if she dared to show. Cooler heads prevailed, fortunately. Wilchins came, and by the end of the conference, half of the attendees were wearing Transexual Menace t-shirts.

Divinity could be difficult to contact. She had no home phone, and did not do e-mail. If I had one phone call from her while I was away during the day (I told her my schedule many times), I must have had fifty, giving me a breakdown of her movements and phone numbers where she could be reached. Invariably, by the time I got home and reviewed my calls, her time frame had expired. When I would call one of her numbers, the person answering the phone would be clearly annoyed at getting the call and unwilling to take a message.

The only reliable way to reach her was by the mail—although much of the time I wasn't sure about her address, as she was chronically underemployed. Once she phoned when I was actually at home and told me she was sleeping in the stretch limo she was driving—not a pretty thought.

Eventually, Divinity found what would be considered a dream job by many crossdressers—selling sexy clothing to strippers out of the trunk of her car. She enjoyed this work, and kept at it until her death.

Divinity's feud with Charlotte's Tri-Ess chapter Kappa Beta was of long duration and high intensity. She could not let it go, and neither, apparently, could at least some of Kappa Beta's leadership. The feud started, according to Divinity, when she wore her usual short skirt and a pair of condom earrings to a K-B meeting. She rarely passed up an opportunity to snipe at Kappa Beta, either in print or verbally.

Still, Divinity was a good and caring person. She was concerned for transgendered people and worked hard, in her own way, to fight for our rights. She was a passionate supporter of Southern Comfort, even though she was bitterly disappointed at not being named to the board after being conference Chair. Her *All The Beautiful People,* which was a pastiche of clippings from *Tapestry*, *Chrysalis* (a magazine I used to edit), newspaper articles and cartoons, and womens' magazines like *Cosmopolitan* and *Allure*, sprinkled with lots of opinions from the editor, was always an interesting read.

At one point (I think it was during the limousine period), Divinity found it necessary to dip into ATBP's funds to keep herself alive. To her credit, she owned up to it in the pages of the newsletter and promised to pay the money back—and I'm quite sure she did.

I didn't escape Divinity's wrath. She talked me into agreeing to present at her Trans-Am conference, to be held in Charlotte, a drive of about four hours from my home in Atlanta. As the date of the conference drew near, with no word from Divinity, it was clear Trans-Am wasn't going to happen. With her erratic lines of communication, there was little I could do but wait for a call. It never came.

As luck would have it, Divinity's nemesis, Kappa Beta, invited me to their cotillion to speak the same weekend (somehow, I don't think the overlap of dates was a coincidence). I agreed, thinking that if by some miracle Trans-Am were to come off, I would be at hand in Chaarlotte. I had a great time with some great folks at the K-B Cotillion.

When I finally heard from Divinity, it was by letter, blessing me out about TransAm. I wasn't sure what I had done wrong. I suspected I was a convenient target for her frustration at the cancellation of the conference.

Divinity's death came as a shock to me. Although she was in her sixties, she was so ornery and so vibrant and so determined that I guess I thought she would live forever. Alas, she didn't. As irritating as I found her at times, I would like nothing more than to come home from work one day soon and find one or her cryptic messages on my answering machine.

I didn't know Donna Nadeau nearly so well as I did Divinity, but she certainly made for an exciting time for me at the 2002 Fantasia Fair. Her Parkinson-like symptoms were severe by that time (in 2001, she had brought a personal assistant), but in 2002 she gave no advance notice she was coming.

Provincetown may be one of the least accessible towns in the United States. Although the terrain is flat, the buildings are hundreds of years old, with lots of stairs. There are few ramps. I make my living working with people with disabilities, and I know what a problem that can be. When Donna showed at the office, I took her aside and, in my capacity as Fair Director, told her to please let us know if she needed any special services or support.

That year Donna picked the only inn in town that sat high on a sand dune, fifty feet or more over the level of the street, in the West End—a good mile from town center, where most of the Fair activities are held.

On the evening of the Fashion Show, Dainna Cicotello came to me. Somehow, she had received word that Donna had left her inn and was walking to the Crown & Anchor. It was after dark, and, as is typical of October weather on Cape Cod, windy and spitting rain. Dainna and I spent forty-five frantic minutes cruising Provincetown's streets looking for her. We didn't find her, but when we got back to the C&A, there she was, out of breath and in the midst of a panic attack: she wanted to be in the Fashion Show. It was ninety minutes before curtain time.

Now, to be in the show, one must register and rehearse. MC Miqqi Gilbert (the very same Miqqi Gilbert who is reviews editor and a columnist for this magazine) was nowhere about. I told Donna I would talk to Miqqi when she arrived (she wasn't due for another 45 minutes), and that I was sure we could accommodate her request to be in the show. I asked if she had eaten. No. I found a sandwich and soft drink for her and said, "Why don't you take a seat and eat? Do you need help or can you handle this food yourself? You can? Okay, then why don't you eat and then spent the next forty minutes or so relaxing and cooling off. I'll ask Miqqi to see if someone can help you with your hair and makeup. Did you bring the outfits you want to wear? Good. We're going to leave you alone now. I'll be back to check on you before the show."

Donna was in the fashion show, and you know what? She was fabulous.

... And That's the Way It Is

by Monica F. Helms

There isn't a theme park on this planet with a roller coaster ride which could compete with the events the transgender community has gone through in 2004. I remember telling my girlfriend on New Year's Eve that it was going to be a very interesting year—but not in my wildest dreams could I have expected things to turn out as they did.

In April, the Georgia House passed an anti-same-sex marriage amendment. Dallas was taking a picture of me at the IFGE Convention in Philadelphia when I was on the phone and got the news *(that's Monica—why do one thing when you can do two? –Dallas)*. I remember crying my heart out to her after I got off the phone.

At that very convention, I saw one of my best friends, Angela Brightfeather, receive the Trinity Award, along with Julie Johnson and Brenda Thomas. The next day, I heard a magnificent speech by Marsha Botzer when she received the Virginia Prince Award. Down and up on the roller coaster ride.

Michael Bailey's *The Man Who Would Be Queen* was nominated for a Lamba Literary Foundation award, and then pulled after a storm of letters and articles from the community convinced Lambda to drop the nomination. Down and up again.

In Orange County, California, three of the five school board trustees of the Westminster School District refused to revise the district's anti-discrimination policy to comply with a state law that allows students and staff to define their gender regardless of biological sex. They used religion as the reason to discriminate. Parents and teachers were upset with them and with the fact that the school district would lose millions of dollars because of their stance. When it looked like the trustees were about to lose their fight, they changed the definition of gender in the district's anti-discrimination policy, and the State of California bought it. Down, up, and back down.

The trial of Gwen Araujo's killers brought out more emotions, as the transgender panic defense reared its ugly head. But, through all of this, Gwen's mother went to DC to lobby for transgender inclusion in the Hate Crimes Bill, and then later petitioned a judge to legally change her "son's" name to Gwen. Down and up.

The trial of Gwen Araujo's killers brought out more emotions, as the transgender panic defense reared its ugly head.

At the Sacramento County Sheriff's Department, four transgendered women were raped and used as sex partners to reward other inmates for good behavior. Dean Johansson, the attorney for the four women, stated that jailers allowed inmates access to the transgendered women, knowing full well the men intended to brutalize and rape them. The women were also made to walk around with their tops off to show their breasts. This was a big down; we all hope that there's a big up at the end of the trial.

At the end of April, the National Transgender Advocacy Coalition lobbied Congress for inclusion in ENDA and the Hate Crimes Bill. They received a lot of positive responses from the various offices they visited—yet they also discovered that our old nemesis, the Human Right Campaign, has secretly done nothing to ensure transgendered people were covered in those bills—this while publicly claiming they support trans-inclusion. The newly reinvigorated Transexual Menace staged a protest in front of the HRC building that rattled a few cages *(and up again, see the editorial on page 17 —Dallas)*. We go up. We go down.

There's more. In April, transgendered Americans were elected in two different states as delegates to the 2004 Democratic National Convention *(Monica is being modest. She was one of the delegates—Dallas)*. As of this writing, there have not been any more transgendered delegates chosen, but several are still trying to go. At the 2000 DNC, only one transgendered person was elected—Jane Fee, from Minnesota. But, as is true to form with any roller coaster ride, there has to be a down.

Speaking of Senator John Kerry *(We were speaking of Kerry? Monica, did you lose a page of your column again? —Dallas)*, a group of transgender activists set up a meeting with members of Kerry's campaign to talk about the Senator's non-inclusive stance on ENDA and the Hate Crimes Bill. This was a chance to educate the Senator on our issues. Going up.

In an HRC interview last year, Kerry insisted that both bills should be passed without the words gender identity and gender expression included; he is a fan of "incremental protection." We can guess what other Massachusetts Senator and what Massachusetts Representative filled Kerry's head with such archaic ideas. *(C'mon Monica, we can't wait three more months for the answer! I'm going to just say it! Ted Kennedy and Barney Fife—I mean Frank—Dallas)*.

The group got the chance to speak with two representatives of Kerry's campaign, both of which are associated with HRC. The meeting did not go well. The upshot: the idea of including transgen-

dered people in ENDA and the Hate Crimes Bill would not be presented to the Senator for consideration. However, the group didn't walk away with a completely negative experience. At the meeting was Eric Stern, the head of the GLBT committee for the Democratic National Committee. Eric showed the group that he is supportive of trans-inclusion and said he would do what he could to help our community through the Democratic National Committee. Up, down, and up again *(Monica, are you getting dizzy yet? I can see you are. Here, sit in this special gold-plated chair—Dallas).*

There was one major up that did not end in a down for the community. On May 1, 2004, fifty transgendered veterans came to our nation's capitol to attend the first ever Transgender Veterans March to the Wall. That day turned out to be one of the most monumental days in our community's history. Veterans from all parts of the country gathered at the Vietnam Memorial and shed a river of tears for friends they had lost in that war, and many other wars. That afternoon, they witnessed a historical event when, for the first time ever, transgendered veterans laid a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknowns *(read the full story and see the pictures in this issue—Dallas).*

As you can see, there are many stories to talk about in my column, but due to space, I will pick a couple on which to elaborate. The roller coaster has slowed down just long enough for me to write this column. Then it's back on for another go-around on this "T-Ticket" roller coaster ride. In June, there will be extensive discussions on the marriage amendment here in Georgia. In July, I will be smoozing with politicians at the Democratic National Convention, while hearing the faint chant, "Jerry ... Jerry ... Jerry" in the background. Maybe I'll get a picture with Bill Clinton. Monica and Bill, back together again. Sorry, no smoking cigars in the convention hall. Now, I have to dig out my blue dress.

Can't Teach an Old HRC New Tricks

The same ol' HRC is still playing the same ol' tricks on the transgender community.

As a writer, I fully understand the strength of the English language and how changing one word can drastically change the meaning of a sentence. And, as an activist, spoken and written words are the best weapons a person can have, once they master the subtleties of the English language. This is a lesson HRC has learned all to well.

For the last 18 months HRC has been stating openly and publicly that they will support a fully-inclusive Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA) and the Hate Crimes Bill, called the Local Law Enforcement Enhancement Act (LLEEA.) However, during the National Transgender Advocacy Coalition's Lobby Days at the end of April, we received a clearer picture of what HRC has actually been saying at the Congressional offices.

HRC did a survey recently, asking gays and lesbians if transgendered people should be included in ENDA and LLEEA, and 85% said yes.

In one Congressional office of a supporter for ENDA, an aide stated, "I can't believe HRC is holding this up. You would think they, of all people would understand this." Throughout Lobby Days, the activists heard similar statements and were quoted the same lines HRC has been saying to us for years, such as, "More education needs to be done," and "We need to study this more." It became painfully obvious to the lobbyists that HRC was not on board with supporting transgender inclusion in ENDA and LLEEA, as they had lead the rest of the GLBT community to believe.

With all of this, the activists pieced together exactly what had been happening in the Congressional offices. HRC would state that they support a fully-inclusive ENDA and LLEEA, but if the Congressperson didn't wish to support transgender inclusion, that was also okay with HRC. Many GLBT national organizations refuse to support any bill that is not transgender-inclusive. Other organizations are transgender-supportive, but are not on the Hill or as visible as HRC is. HRC is the primary organization Congresspeople turn to for GLB *AND* T issues. Many Congressmen and Congresswomen are now wondering why HRC has been so wishy-washy on their stance with transgender rights.

It appears HRC is giving members of Congress a chance to take the easy way out. While other GLBT organizations are saying they will support only transgender inclusive bills, HRC is leaving out the word "only." It's their nice little play on the English language.

Other things have happened with HRC in the last few months that have given the transgender community a renewed reason to once again play hardball with this lumbering giant. When Cheryl Jacques took over in January, a group of well-known transgender activists requested a meeting with her. She didn't see them until April. When she did, she was cold and stated that equal rights has to be done incrementally, and that more research was needed on the issue. What? Did I step into the Way-Back Machine again? This is the same old stuff HRC was saying back in the 1990s, long before Cheryl came out. What is it about politicians from Massachusetts? They can't all think that way.

There has been a lot of research already done in regards to transgender inclusion. Jurisdictions left and right are either adding gender identity and gender expression to their own ENDAs, or passing a fully-inclusive GLBT ENDA. This includes California, Rhode Island, Minnesota, and New Mexico, along with nearly all of the largest cities in the US. Twenty-four percent of America's population now live in an area that protects transgendered people from employment discrimination. Eight states include transgendered people in their hate crimes bills.

HRC did a survey recently, asking gays and lesbians if transgendered people should be included in ENDA and LLEEA, and 85% said yes. When asked if they thought including transgendered people would slow the bills down, 70% said no. Seems like HRC was going against the very people they were supposed to be advocating for.

HRC did another survey in 2002; it was introduced at the 2002 Southern Comfort. They asked Americans how they thought about transgendered people

and whether they should be covered by hate crime laws and employment non-discrimination. The numbers were the same for transgender people as for gay men, lesbians, and bisexuals.

A few years ago, HRC gave $5000 to Equality North Carolina to do a survey that asked North Carolinians side-by-side questions on sexual orientation and gender expression. In every area of North Carolina, people were more in favor of giving transgendered people rights than in giving them to gays and lesbians. In one area, it was as much as 10% more. Gee, Cheryl, are you afraid Congress would decide to protect transgendered people over gays and lesbians if they got wind of that survey? That would be a unique switch!

After years of being dormant, an old name in transgender activism, Transexual Menace, became alive again to protest in front of the HRC building in DC. Ethan St. Pierre and Gwen Smith are leading the new Transexual Menace. This protest had been planned weeks earlier, because many activists were going to be in DC for various events. It had been rumored that NTAC made arrangements for this protest, but they had nothing to do with setting it up. Just before leaving for the protest, the protestors received word of the responses from various Congressional offices in regards to HRC not favoring transgender inclusion. This gave the protest a heightened meaning.

It seems the protest generated a lot of interest in the HRC building, because people stared out of their windows at the protestors. A representative of HRC invited the protestors up to the office for discussion, but only St. Pierre and Smith went up. A documentary team from Canada followed them up to the office with a video camera. HRC didn't want the cameras on, but St. Pierre and Smith insisted they roll.

The two activists were told in that meeting that the HRC board will be voting on supporting only transgender-inclusive bills in August. A month later, Christopher Labonte, HRC's Deputy Director for Legislation, was interviewed on Nancy Nangeroni and Gordene Mackenzie's radio show, "GenderTalk," and stated that the board will only be "discussing" the issue and will not vote on it in August. Yet, Chris was in the room at the HRC building when St. Pierre and Smith were told the HRC board *would* be voting on this. Dallas, can we roll the instant replay on that last play? Oh! A fumble at the one-yard line!

After years of being dormant, an old name in transgender activism, Transexual Menace, became alive again to protest in front of the HRC building in DC.

It appeared that all of this action had made HRC nervous. Cheryl Jacques had sent out a letter to the transgender community, restating their support for us, but it didn't state that they would support only trans-inclusive legislation. Winnie Stachelberg, HRC's Political Director, felt it necessary to respond to Gwen's Smith's Ed-Op piece called "Equals' Sign Is For Some" by writing letters to the editors of the various major GLBT publications across the country. She also never stated that HRC would support only transgender inclusive bills. She did mention how hard they have been fighting the Federal Marriage Amendment. I'm willing to bet that only 10% of gays and lesbians really care about getting married, while 100% of all GLBT people don't want to get fired from their jobs because of their sexual orientation or gender expression/identity. HRC has their priorities bass-ackwards. So, what's new?

Not Quite Banned in Boston

My path to becoming a delegate at the DNC was a rather strange one, to say the least. I went to a meeting of Democrats in my county, and they had forms to apply for a delegate position. I sent my application in on time, so I was on the list as one of the people who applied as a Kerry delegate. Later, they scheduled the election of the delegates, and only six people showed up for that. I discovered that in my district they needed three people to be Kerry delegates, and two for Edwards. In our district, only three people applied to be a Kerry delegate, and two applied to be an Edwards delegate. In other words, we all were in. It sounds crazy, but that's how it happened.

Monica Helms *is the founder and current President of the Transgender American Veterans Association and Executive Director of Trans=Action, Georgia's transgender advocacy organization. She serves on boards of various Georgia groups, and is a winner of the 2003 Trinity Award. She can be reached via e-mail at: manicahelms@earthlink.net.*

In November, voters ammended Georgia's constitution to ban gay marriage and civil partnerships. See pages 16-17 for an update on HRC.

You Can Make a Difference!

IFGE is always in need of talented individuals to help us help the transgender community, whether your background is in accounting, web design or anything in between. If you would like to volunteer your skills write to: office@ifge.org or call **781.899.2212.**

This article as was first published in DaKine, *December 2001 and was rewritten for* Tapestry *in March, 2004*

Gender Spectrum

Reflections of a Transgendered Woman

The Long and Winding Road to Social Acceptance

There's still so much more transgendered men and women need to gain in order to obtain fair treatment and "justice for all"—but CELEBRATE! We've come a long way already!

by Li Anne W. Taft

Her manly tattoos give clues of her earlier life as a macho sailor and loving dad and bring Ku`ulei much unwanted attention. A petite, soft-spoken transwoman with flowing hair, the pierced hearts and chained anchors on Ku'ulei's biceps and lower forearms cause many people to stare and question her. Some friends even give her big stink eye when they first see the tattoos—and that she finds hard to ignore.

Ku`ulei transitioned twenty years ago in an East Coast city—a conservative place—at a time when people with different gender identities and expression were held in great disdain. For the first decade in her new life as a woman, Ku`ulei would cover her arms whenever she went out, even with friends. Stink eye, harassment, and bad treatment were daily experiences. She never liked how she was treated and wondered if things would ever get better for her.

Throughout history and across all cultures, there have been people who have lived in a gender not congruent with their birth sex; fourteenth-century folk hero Joan of Arc, jazz legend Billy Tipton, and tennis star Reneé Richards are but three of the world's better known transpeople. But conservative ways of thinking have caused most transgendered and transsexual men and women to suffer from rejection, harassment, discrimination, assault, and murder. Even for those who passed well, the pain of rejection by family and friends was devastating.

Since its birth in the early 1990s, the term transgender has been slowly gaining recognition as an acceptable, natural variation of gender expression. Parallel with and perhaps due in part to growing acceptance of the term, transgendered men and women in Hawaii and elsewhere are now more likely to be viewed not as sexual deviants with a mental disorder, but as strong individuals with integrity who live their lives openly and honestly as a reflection of what they feel inside.

Our society has changed a great deal over the past ten years—and so has Ku`ulei's attitude. She no longer hides her pierced heart and anchors-away tattoos and now goes out often in revealing tanktops and short-sleeve blouses. She has learned to deal with peoples' prejudices—and besides, tattooed arms aren't that unusual any more for a wahine. Nowadays, when Ku`ulei finds people staring and giving her stink eye, she responds to their bad manners and bewildered looks with a feminine wit and warmth, "Confusing, isn't it?" she says with a soft smile and a gentle rub of her tattoos. With more self-confidence and a belief in her own uniqueness, Ku`ulei is now more accepted by strangers and ohana (family) alike.

Ku`ulei's acceptance of her past has encouraged others to accept her gender variance as special and unique. "Despite my born-as-male anatomy, I knew I was not a guy," she will tell friends and those who pause to talk story. "I just acted like one until I was strong enough to face the truth, to be myself and live as the person I knew I was inside. These tattoos are just reminders," she muses, "of a different life a time long ago. That life is a part of me today and will be here tomorrow, too."

Li Anne Wai`oli Taft *resides in Honolulu. She is employed as a University resource specialist. She is an eight-year member of a women's outrigger canoe club, has served as an elected City Neighborhood board member, and writes and lectures on gender issues and non-discrimination. You can reach her at lwaioli@aloha.net. She welcomes your comments and suggestions.*

End Note: The acceptance of Gender Spectrum in DaKine, *a magazine once viewed as an exclusively gay and lesbian publication, demonstrates this new acceptance at a local level. Two years ago, I prepared for editorial resistance to my suggestion for a transgender issues column. However, my idea that transgendered men and women could be given a voice in* DaKine *was surprisingly well-received by publisher Hans Anderson.*

Excerpt, Press Relese, National Center for Transgender Equality (NCTE)

7 August, 2004

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NCTE Energized By HRC Decision
Community Positioned to Introduce Trans-Inclusive ENDA in 2005

WASHINGTON, August 7, 2004 – Today the Human Rights Campaign, the nation's largest LGBT human rights organization, adopted a policy to only support federal anti-discrimination legislation that is trans-inclusive.

At HRC's regular Board of Directors meeting today, a delegation of transgender activists including NCTE Board members Donna Cartwright and Diego Sanchez as well as NCTE Executive Director, Mara Keisling, met with the HRC board to discuss federal legislation.

Keisling noted, "This is an historic day for the transgender movement. The LGBT community's most connected organization in Congress has finally embraced transgender rights equally with those of lesbian, gay and bisexual rights. We are confident that Congress will hear this message."

The decision today caps more than 10 years of work in the transgender community to convince our LGBT allies that we must move forward together. This initiative began in Washington on July 29, 1994 when transgender pioneers Phyllis Frye and Karen Kerin reached out to Senators about our need to be protected from discrimination.

Transgender Rights Attorney of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Lisa Mottet, who also presented at today's meeting, commented, "We have been proud to work with NCTE and the transgender community to enact laws on the state and local level while also advocating for non-negotiable trans-inclusion in ENDA. We welcome the continuing unification of the LGB and T communities and look forward to working with Congress until a trans-inclusive ENDA passes."

Other invited presenters at the HRC Board meeting included Transgender Law and Policy Institute board members Kylar Broadus, Paisley Currah, Jamison Green, and Shannon Minter, as well as activists Reed Bogle and Donna Rose.

Ten Years of Transgender Protests Against HRC— At An End?

On Saturday, 7 August, the Human Rights Campaign announced its Board of Directors had voted to pursue only federal workplace protection legislation that is inclusive of gender identity and expression.

It was a landmark decision, as it reversed ten years of stonewalling (an apt term, that) and behind-the scenes deal-making by HRC to undercut and reverse the work of transgender lobbyists to add inclusive language to the Employment Non-Discrimination Act.

HRC has been under pressure not only from the transgender community, but from its staff and financial contributors and local offices. The courageous stance of at least nine national GLBT organizations, spearheaded by the National Gay & Lesbian Task Force, publicly vowing they would no longer support a non-inclusive ENDA, and a renewal of protests by transgender lobbyists almost certainly contributed to the timing of the decision.

Some members of the transgender community have viewed HRC as an evil empire. This is, of course, not true. Several years ago, HRC changed its mission statement to be trans-inclusive. Even before that, it had worked hard on behalf of transgendered and transsexual people. It's unfortunate and wrongheaded position on ENDA was not really representative of HRC's position on transpeople, although the organization certainly showed a certain level of residual transphobia among its top echelon.

Finally, HRC has caved in on the thing transgender activists have most asked for. Now, we can no longer position them as the enemy. We must support them.

It is only fair and right that transgendered people begin to join HRC and make financial contributions. They have done good work. Now, they will do better work. Finally, they have lived up to their name: Human Rights Campaign.

A History of the Controversy

In 1995, not many people were on the Internet, but Sarah dePalma was. I believe it was she who checked her e-mail and brought the news to Phyllis Frye's 1995 International Conference on Transgender Law and Employment Policy that lobbyists from the Human Rights Campaign Fund (as it was then called) had gone to Congressional offices just after transgender lobbyists Phyllis Frye and Jane Fee had visited. The HRCFers urged the bill's supporters to remove the transgender-inclusive language Frye and Fee had persuaded them to include.

Some members of the transgender community have viewed HRC as an evil empire.

There were hasty strategy meetings at ICTLEP. A flyer was designed and printed, and attendees (myself included) each took one home and made hundreds of copies. The next week, at Pride events all across the U.S., transgender activists, many wearing Transexual Menace t-shirts, leafletted Pride attendees near the HRCF booths. The protests, which made national queer community news, came as a shock not only to the local HRCF people working the booths, but to staff at HRCF's national offices.

Under fire from the transgender community, and under pressure from within, HRC began to change. It began to work with trans community leaders, and do trans-related educational work. Eventually, it even changed its mission statement. Still, the organization was recalcitrant with regard to its position on ENDA.

HRC placed so much spin on trans issues that it was difficult to tell whether and when the organization was sincere. For example, several years ago, HRC conducted focus groups in an attempt to determine the opinion of the American public about transgendered and transsexual people. Perhaps this was done in an honest attempt to gauge the reaction of the American public— or perhaps it was a cynical attempt to generate data to support HRC's exclusion of transgendered people from ENDA. We'll never know. If it was the latter, the plan backfired, for the data revealed that our approval and disapproval rates are virtually identical to those of gay men and lesbians. In other words, data generated by HRC itself suggested there is no rational basis for HRC's position with regard to ENDA.

Pressure from transgender activists ratcheted up this spring, with Transgender Lobby Days. Gwen Smith's article "Exclusionary Tactics" appeared in GLBT papers. The National Transgender Advocacy Coalition, The National Center for Transgender Equality, and assorted activists poured on the pressure.

On August 7th, HRC did the right thing. Let's give them our support.

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Ask Ari

Dear Ari:
Why do we need the HBIGDA standards of care? Haven't we come far enough in the handling of folks with gender issues that rules like these aren't needed?

—Lucinda, living full-time in Heartland

Dear Lucinda,

If I only had a dollar for each time I get asked this question, it would probably pay for my next trip to Italy for the bi-annual HBIGDA conference!

For those who don't know, HBIGDA is the Harry Benjamin International Gender Dysphoria Association, Inc., named for Harry Benjamin—an endocrinologist—who was one of the first professionals to advocate for medical treatments for transsexuals. The name is a bit controversial these days, and I would personally like to see the phrase "gender dysphoria" removed and have the organization renamed The Harry Benjamin Association (HBIGDA is a bit of a mouthful).

Names aside, HBIGDA is the only international professional organization devoted to the understanding and treatment of what has been referred to as gender identity disorders. Again, gender identity is not something I ever think of as "disordered." Like many of you, I would prefer to see transgender issues de-pathologized, i.e., removed from the manual of mental illnesses.

Despite the difficulties inherent in this language, HBIGDA remains the only professional organization solely dedicated to working with people who are transgendered and transsexual. I believe strongly that such collaborative communication is essential for quality medical and clinical treatment. I should probably disclose at this point that I am member of HBIGDA and find my involvement to be one of my most meaningful affiliations in my professional life.

I've discovered over the last five years that there are many misinformed assumptions about what HBIGDA and its membership are all about. HBIGDA is an organization with a wide international, inter-disciplinary membership, including physicians, psychologists, and social workers—some of whom are transgendered or transsexual themselves—and many interested non-professionals, including a growing number of trans activists.

Contrary to popular belief, HBIGDA is not a bunch of middle-aged white male medical professionals in suits finding ways to hold back transgendered people from transitioning. Last year in Ghent, Belgium, I had a lovely conversation with a woman psychiatrist from Turkey, a Danish social worker, an Italian sexologist, and a cross-dressed child psychologist from Norway—professionals breaking ground on gender issues in their own countries. I listened to a Belgian transsexual doctor discuss fertility and sperm storage concerns for MTFs, and two American therapists report on research on the families of trans people. Over an excellent mussel dinner, I heard a transman's critique of Michael Bailey's book, and had a lovely conversation with two transwomen scholars about aging issues within the gender community. HBIGDA is an unusual gathering of iconoclastic scholars, researchers, clinicians, and political activists, representing the continuum of gender presentations and possibilities. (One thing to bear in mind before judging gender specialists, is that—generally speaking—transgender medicine is not well-respected professionally, and we are often seen in the same disparaging light as the population of people we serve.)

At that last HBIGDA conference, I was pleased to be part of a panel discussion critiquing and debating the current Standards of Care. Many of the issues raised in HBIGDA are the kind of issues that I suspect Lucinda is referring to in her original question. How do we get therapists out of the role of being gatekeepers for the medical professional, and yet protect our clients from rushing ahead without adequate knowledge and information about medical treatments? I know that for those of you who are absolutely clear about starting medical treatments, the HBGIDA Standards of Care can feel like a financial—and time-consuming burden. However, I do know that many of the clients I work with are unsure whether they want to begin treatment, and have deep, unresolved questions about work and career, family and children, passing, and surgery. Therapeutic involvement can serve to help clients resolve their issues before they begin medical treatments, and throughout the transition process.

> Although it isn't common, some people who seek transsexual treatment have severe mental illnesses in which gender issues are part of their illness; they are not actually transsexual.

The Standards of Care are often misunderstood, and unfortunately there are professionals who use them to withhold treatments and overly psychoanalyze clients. The goal of the SOC, however, is to set standards for medical treatments and eligibility for access to those treatments. I understand that this may seem patronizing to some people, but the alternative to having SOC is to have NO standards of care at all. Without some kind of standards, transsexuals would be at the mercy of uneducated and unscrupulous doctors, those not interested in state-of-

the-art treatments, but only in financial gain from an often-desperate population.

Although it isn't common, some people who seek transsexual treatment have severe mental illnesses in which gender issues are part of their illness; they are not actually transsexual. With treatment of their mental illness, their "gender issues" disappear. Some people who seek medical treatment have unresolved issues about sexual orientation, believing that if they "change sex" and have a heterosexual relationship, this would be more acceptably socially or religiously than being in a homosexual relationship. People who are active alcoholics, or have misinformation about what treatment will do ("My hair will grow back on my head; a friend had this happen, honest!") also seek treatment, and need support resolving these issues before they begin transition.

Many, many people who seek treatment are not thinking clearly about issues related to job security, or custody issues regarding children, or interpersonal issues with spouses, partners, and parents. It doesn't mean these people aren't eligible for gender-related medical treatments, it just means they may need a more thorough evaluation and treatment plan to address the issues. The more people work through these issues, the more successful and less traumatic their transition process will be.

The SOC should not be rules (and personally I would run from any clinician who used them this way). They are flexible guidelines, highlighting the knowledge gained within the last 40 years about the stumbling blocks trans people experience in transition and defining ways to hopefully eliminate or minimize them. The goal is not to block trans people from needed services, but to advocate for clients requesting those services and assist them in the best possible transition.

Bear in mind that most medical and clinical experts are woefully ignorant about transgendered peoples' needs, and the SOC serve to set professional guidelines at the highest level of available medical and clinical knowledge. Most gender specialists aren't using the SOC to control the lives of transgendered people; they see themselves as advocates who can assist people and their families through the quagmire of gender transition. Personally, I would be far more concerned working with a professional who never heard of the SOC, or completely disregards them, then one who is well-versed in them and uses them as flexible guidelines, individualizing them for each client.

I suggest that if you are seeking therapy or medical treatments you interview prospective therapists about their opinions and values regarding the SOC and find someone compatible with your needs. Remember, the goal of therapy is to assist you in expressing your own authenticity and increasing your insight into your life so you become healthier and more whole. The relationships between client and therapist should be a mutually respectful partnership, and at its best can be a sacred shared journey.

To learn more about HBIGDA or get a copy of the Standards of Care, visit www.hbigda.org.

Arlene (Ari) Istar Lev, *CSW-R, CASAC, is a family therapist and gender specialist, and is founder of Choices Counseling and Consulting in Albany, NY. She is a Board Member of the Family Pride Coalition, and the author of the newly released* Transgender Emergence: Therapeutic Guidelines for Working with Gender-Variant People and Their Families *(Haworth Press, 2004). She can be reached at info@choicescansulting.com.*

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The Feminist Crossdresser

Part 1 of 2

Miqqi Alicia Gilbert, Ph.D.

The face of crossdressing has been changing quite a bit over the last twenty years, and especially over the last ten. Younger crossdressers seem to have a finer sensibility of what the feminine is about and a more realistic sense of being a woman. Still, there are a large number of us who don't take the time or maybe simply haven't had the opportunity to reflect on some basic issues surrounding the idea of being a woman–even part time. So, I'm going to take a couple of columns to discuss the issue of feminism and crossdressing. All of what I'm about to say is relevant to crossdressers; some will be relevant to transsexualism, and some, hopefully, to FTMs. But no matter who you are, I hope you'll find the discussion of these issues interesting.

First, a caveat for this column and the following one. Since this is a column and not a book, I have to take some shortcuts and use some generalizations that are, I confess, too broad. Nothing holds true of all crossdressers, and making generalizations about feminism isn't merely difficult—it can be downright dangerous. Nonetheless, I'll do both and proceed forthwith.

Obviously, the first question is, what is feminism? That is at the same time a simple and a complex question. On the one hand, the basic tenets that are largely common to all flavors of feminism are pretty straightforward. On the other hand, there are different theories of feminism that compete with each other and have in some instances dramatically different approaches. Still, it's possible to come up with a minimum idea that most feminist theories would embrace. So, here it goes. Feminism at the minimum is the belief that sexism is wrong and that there are no good reasons for men, simply because of the sex they are, to have advantages, power, or rights not available to women. This means, at the least, that women and men should have equal access to education and employment, respect for their minds, and a full choice of roles in life. It means there is no natural or religious or social justification for women to be relegated to particular roles, to be denied opportunities available to men, or to assume an inferior or subservient position to men.

Now, most crossdressers embrace these values and will readily agree that sexism is wrong. Why is it, then, that so many feminists (or, for that matter, so many women,) have issues concerning crossdressers? Well, these objections come from a variety of sources. The first issue has to do with the idea of caricature. While I honestly believe this occurs much less frequently than it used to, a significant number of crossdressers tend to overdo and hyperbolize those aspects of womanhood that exemplify, for example, the idea of woman as object. So the crossdresser with oversized breasts, super high heels, spatula-applied makeup, and a micro-mini exhibits just those aspects of being "feminine" that feminists most decry. The fact that there are genetic women, born and raised women, who present in precisely that caricature-like way doesn't ameliorate the felt slight. The issue underlying this reaction is what sort of femininity is one going to embrace? Is being feminine about being an object of display, or is it about being a certain kind of person?

When I say that a woman who is exhibited or exhibits herself in an objectifying way is not exemplifying a modern and feminist idea of womanness, I'm not saying anything mysterious. In our and similar cultures, women are to be looked at, to be evaluated first and primarily on the basis of their appearance and the degree to when they cause sexual arousal and stimulation. And, yes, we (almost) all want to be sexy and attractive, and there's nothing wrong with that—*unless it becomes the only salient fact about the person.* Then things like what she says, what she accomplishes, what she does, what she feels, what she wants, needs, and envisions become irrelevant or at best secondary. *This is not the case for men.* As a man, you are important, and your wishes and goals are paramount; they are the most important things about you. Power and choice doesn't accrue only to studly guys, but to those of us who are overweight and not fabulously handsome. Why? Because our existence as objects, most especially post-adolescence, is not the most important way we exist.

> Sure, almost everyone, male or female, likes to get all dolled up sometimes, but when you appear at breakfast with four-inch heels and a tiara, then you're saying that there's nothing else interesting about you.

When crossdressers present themselves as women whose only reason for existence is to be looked at, to garner attention, rather than as an involved and complete person, the reaction is often negative. That isn't the portrayal most women favor. Sure, almost everyone, male or

female, likes to get all dolled up sometimes, but when you appear at breakfast with four-inch heels and a tiara, then you're saying that there's nothing else interesting about you.

Many crossdressers have a female identity that is based more on their mothers than most women. I believe one reason younger crossdresser are less likely to appear at breakfast as if the Queen were joining them is that their mothers were around for the feminist revolution and they are more likely to have been exposed to feminist thought and its impact on presentation and attire. Still, there is no question but that crossdressers haven't had the training, conditioning, and day-to-day experience all women go through. Girls learn from each other about style, clothing, makeup, and carriage. Certainly, their mothers play a significant role (often, less than mother would like!), but friends and the exemplars of popular icons and their styles are even more important. Boys also go through this, but the regimen regarding what to wear and when to wear it isn't nearly so stringent. Boys are lucky if they come out of adolescence knowing what matches, let alone being able to identify taupe and fuchsia.

The crossdresser, in some cases, comes out a bit better than his non-transgendered brothers. Perhaps he was paying attention to the girls, their style, and what they wear, while carefully not bringing attention to himself. But even in a best-case scenario, that everyday, constant, unrelenting feedback is just not there. The closest we come to that sort of training is when we attend transgender events and get to observe how others dress and how others look at us. There is also a change coming down as crossdressing becomes more well-known and even more public. These days I see fewer outrageous presentation than I did 20 years ago. With the exception of the "live for fun" outrageous fetishist set, many crossdressers now exhibit a more mature sense of style and place.

Many crossdressers have a female identity that is based more on their mothers than most women.

Another thorny issue that arises for feminists is that men who crossdress have the privilege of being able to pick it up and put it down. In other words, we can be our woman selves when we want to, but easily drop it when it isn't convenient or is liable to be costly. Every crossdresser fantasizes about dressing en femme at work, of hearing his heels click on the linoleum as he walks down the corridor, of carefully smoothing his skirt as he sits down by his desk, legs crossed at the ankles, manicured nails picking up his pink flowered tea cup. Oh, sigh. It's funny, but when a crossdresser fantasizes about working as a woman, he doesn't fantasize about being paid less. He doesn't dream of being in a meeting while his ideas are ignored, or of being expected to take on menial or "nurturing" roles. He doesn't dream about struggling to choose between career and child rearing, or about changing jobs because his husband got a promotion.

No. When we take off our wigs and bras, we put on our male privilege. It's just there, whether we want it to be or not. Not surprisingly, this rankles some women. We don't even have to think about fancy feminist theory here, all we have to do is think about the crossdresser who comes home from a night out and leaves a makeup-stained bathroom for his wife to clean up. Rankle? You bet.

In the next issue I'll talk about how being crossdressers gives us the opportunity to become more aware of womens' issues, and so make us better feminists. So, here's a request. If you're a crossdresser (or transsexual) and have experienced sexism while dressed, whether it was negative or positive, please drop me a line. (One of my favorite sexist stories, for example, involves men coming to my aid.) If we collect enough of them, we'll have an accompanying feature.

Miqqi Alicia Gilbert, *Ph.D., is a professor of philosophy at York University in Toronto, Canada. She writes, "As always, your feedback is important to me. I need to know you're out there. Please drop a line to miqqi@gilbert1.net, and send your stories to the same address."*

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(This continues a discussion begun in Tapestry #105, page 16 — Ed.)

Transcending Genders

A monthly look into transgender lives for mental-health therapists.

Growing Pains

by Judy Osborne

Although usually we're an agreeable bunch, transgender people seem to argue an awful lot these days. So rancorous are the arguments that friendships and affiliations can end when viewpoints differ. Our conflicts might represent a necessary step toward building a mature subculture, but they're painful. And the Harry Benjamin International Gender Dysphoria Association's Standards of Care seem to generate more than their share of heat.

Advances in plastic surgery and endocrinology after World War II made "sex changes" possible. Our dreams could now come true. Damaged lives could be redeemed. Science and medicine represented salvation.

Our salvation was not without its downside, though. Physicians generally viewed their pledge to do no harm as prohibiting them from surgically altering healthy tissue or administering opposite-sex hormones. In the absence of research to the contrary, mental health professionals adopted society's view that nurture made us as we are and therapy could correct our gender identities to match our bodies. Only those deemed chronically and irredeemably ill (and those who lied well) received the treatment which cured them. Transgender's illness model took root.

The Benjamin Association came into being 25 years or so later, in 1979. Harry Benjamin had published the results of his ten-year triage of sex-change candidates three years earlier. Benjamin made a strong case for the notion that gender identities were difficult—if not impossible—to alter. The idea of surgically rebuilding healthy tissue sparked less controversy by then. Aesthetic plastic surgery was commonplace. Hormone therapy and sex reassignment surgery began to gain grudging recognition. DSM-III, published in 1980, added transsexuality as a diagnostic category, ironically just three years and one edition after homosexuality had been removed.

The writers of the first SOC understood the controversy they were generating and acted with caution. Requirements for therapy were rigid and unyielding. Candidates for sex reassignment, feeling impatient and worried about being rejected, conformed to therapist's expectations by lying. Others searched out alternate paths to treatment, often with disastrous consequences.

Now, many revisions later, the SOC's requirements have been softened considerably. Eminent transgender professionals sit on the HBIGDA board and committees and present scholarly papers at the biennial conferences. Transgender input is seen by all now as valuable, even essential.

Even so, many in the transgender community continue to see the SOC as a valueless barrier in the road toward gender congruity. Three general requirements of the SOC anger them most: (1) prior to hormone therapy, a candidate either must live full-time for three months in the opposite gender or engage in psychotherapy for a three-month period (with some exceptions); (2) prior to genital reconstruction or breast surgery, a candidate must live full-time in the opposite gender for a year; and (3) before either of these procedures can be performed, one and sometimes two mental health professionals must submit letters to attending physicians certifying that a candidate has met a variety of eligibility and readiness criteria.

Opponents to the SOC argue that, just as a decision to have any other cosmetic plastic surgery is made in a compact between patient and surgeon, so should be genital plastic surgery. People have a right to control their own bodies. Allowing mental health professionals to stand in the way of access to desired treatment distorts the therapeutic relationship anyway. Clients feel they must give correct answers in order to obtain the necessary letters. Transgender research remains primitive, and therapists often base their approvals less on valid research and more on subjective feelings about clients and gender nonconformity in general. The SOC specify a cookie-cutter approach which fails to recognize differences in the history and commitment of transgender clients and differences in the transgender-related experience of therapists. The SOC are simplistic. They divide the transgender community simply into transsexuals and non-transsexuals, failing to recognize and offer treatment to the vast variety of individual presentations and needs.

Those who support the SOC argue that non-emergency medical treatment must never be initiated without expert diagnosis and informed consent. Mental health professionals are the recognized experts on transsexuality. Transgender people tend to deceive themselves, some even believing that surgery all by itself will transform them into successful members of another gender. Unrealistic expectations need to be addressed in therapy before possibly tragic surgery is performed. Mental disorders which could underlie an urge to change genders need to be uncovered and dealt with before such significant, permanent, and destabilizing changes occur in one's life. Fantasies must be brought to reality. Burdens of guilt accumulated while living outside society's strictures must be alleviated and self-esteem must be bolstered. Problems with dissociation, substance abuse, psychoses, certain neuroses, depression, suicidal tendencies, self-control, and so on must be identified and managed before they are heightened by the emotional events surrounding changing gender in a hostile society.

As in most human affairs, true wisdom probably can be found somewhere toward the midpoint between the two extremes of opinion.

I hope you're finding this information interesting and useful. You're welcome to contact me at heyjude@eskimo.com. JT

Dragons and Demons and Lace... Oh, My!

by Allana Katie Allen

It may have its roots in the fire-breathing myths of the Middle Ages, or may simply be the extended fantasy of knights in shining armor. Whatever the reason, modern-day firefighters refer to fire as "The Dragon."

Since, to be alive, you must consume oxygen and fuel, fire technically lives. It isn't a hard stretch, therefore, for firefighters to see flames as a living, fire-breathing dragon set upon their demise.

In recent years, especially after the horrendous attack on the World Trade Center that claimed the lives of more than four hundred firefighters, we have been referred to as heroes. While many have earned that title—some by making the supreme sacrifice—I have been a firefighter for twenty years and don't consider myself a hero. Mind you, I do realize the job isn't for the faint-hearted. It requires great inner strength, and, quite often, a fair amount of outer strength as well.

At five-foot-six-inches and two hundred pounds, I've been working out with weights since I was a boy. I'm not Charles Atlas, but the last time I noticed, I wasn't having sand kicked in my face on the beaches, either. Even female firefighters, knowing the rigorous demands of the job, work hard to develop their muscular strength. As a result, you don't see many feminine firefighters, until you take a closer look.

Yes, I'm a crossdresser—a big, burly, hero-type, almost Superman, walk-through-fire, eat-nails-for-breakfast firefighter in silk and lace panties!

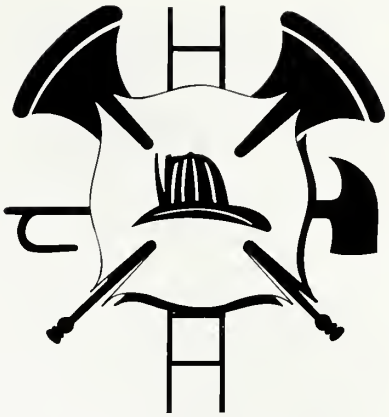
I'd love to tell you I started dressing a few years ago to escape the stress of my job, but the truth is I started when I was just a boy and have been dressing for as long as I can remember. Until recently, I thought I was the only crossdressing firefighter. I mean, come on, how many guys like me could there be out there? Then I had the pleasure of meeting Stephanie, an officer in a mid-sized East Coast fire department. Oh, and a MTF crossdresser as well. She is a wonderful lady with a heart as big as her smile, and she helped me understand it's okay to be who I am.

Finding Stephanie was a turning point for me. I knew there were thousands—if not millions—of other crossdressers in the world, but I never imagined any were firefighters. I began to wonder just how great our numbers really are. I wondered also how the others dealt with the emotions they must keep bottled up inside when the horrors of our job reach out and touch their feminine hearts.

Yes, I'm a crossdresser—a big, burly, hero-type, almost Superman, walk-through-fire, eat-nails-for-breakfast firefighter in silk and lace panties!

Battling The Dragon is a test of courage, skill, and training. It's one-on-one combat: you vs. the fire. It requires great courage at times, full concentration, total self-reliance, and inner strength. But basically it's a slugfest. You advance your hose against the flames and it backs away. It advances toward you and you back away. Sometimes it wins, and you have no option but to retreat. Other times, you emerge victorious and the flames are quelled. In the course of the battle your only emotions are determination, anger, and sometimes fear (which keeps us alive). The only hormone you call upon is testosterone, and you need ever drop you can get.

But firefighters don't just fight fires. It isn't always just a slugfest. And sometimes testosterone gets in the way. Many years ago my ladder company was called to the scene of a motor vehicle accident. En route, we were informed that it was a



vehicle vs. a pedestrian. On arrival at the scene, we found a large truck had run over a young boy. He was most certainly dead, but we were neither qualified nor allowed to make that decision. We began "working" him—administering oxygen and attempting to revive his crushed and twisted lifeless little body. It was several hours before the coroner arrived to pronounce him. They were hours of emotional hell.

Many fire departments have on-call counselors trained to help you through these situations. Our counseling team arrived at the station-house minutes after we returned. Though they are well-trained and qualified to help the average firefighter deal with his emotions, they had nothing to offer me. The woman inside me saw only her own two sons lying lifeless in that street. My emotions were nothing like those of the other firefighters. I felt emotions only a mother can feel. I wanted to cry endlessly. but I couldn't.

Over the years, there have been many such instances that have left demons I could have dealt with if I had someone who actually understood what I was truly feeling, but I had to push them aside, bury them under a macho exterior, and move on.

Society must begin to offer support for transgender issues in the workplace. Counselors must be trained to handle these situations in a manner that allows them to reach out without outing their clients. Until that day comes, we have no choice but to keep pushing our demons aside.

My demons are hidden, but they haven't left me. One day I'll sit down and have a good cry, and wash them all away. *TT*

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I Never Felt Like Myself

by Jordan Winden

Different results of the one Master Impulse: the necessity of securing one's self-approval. They wear diverse clothes and are subject to diverse moods, but in whatsoever ways they masquerade they are the same person all the time. To change the figure, the compulsion that moves a man—and there is but the one—is the necessity of securing the contentment of his own spirit. When it stops, the man is dead.

—Mark Twain, What Is Man?

Imagine a little girl who dreams of growing up to look like mom, who dreams of the day her breasts will come in and of the dress she'll wear on her wedding day, who wants to be a cheerleader with pompoms and a miniskirt and some day give birth and be a mommy. Then one day she finds out her breasts will never develop. Instead, her voice will get lower, her hairline will recede, hair with grow all over her face and body, her features will harden, and she'll never be allowed to wear anything frilly or pink.

Now think about a little boy who wants to grow up to be like dad, who dreams of the day his voice will deepen and his beard will grow in, and of the tuxedo he'll wear to the prom, who wants to be strong and adventurous, to climb rocks with his shirt off. Then one day he finds out great insidious lumps will grow on his chest and the tough-guy demeanor will be eclipsed by the little girl's voice he'll forever speak in. His features will stay soft, his beard will never grow, his height will never increase, his muscles won't develop like those other boys, and he will never look quite right in the clothes he likes.

Would they simply accept themselves and forget their dreams, or would their dreams haunt them until the misery of futility became their undoing?

People have ideals for which they spend their lives reaching for. If they stop chasing their dreams, or if they denounce them as futile, they lose their identity and essentially cease to live. This is a dark place people come to when deeply depressed. It's a place difficult to return from, a place where it's easy to die. Without a destination and a path, whether rocky or paved, connecting you to it, you tend to lose sight of the purpose for being. If THIS is IT as far as you can see and "it" is not good, then death is preferable.

When I was myself, I never felt like myself. No matter what was good in my life, I was depressed. No matter how true to myself I remained and how proud I was of my individuality, my self-hatred and revulsion knew no bounds. So I started role playing. I started trying on different possible selves in search of an inner peace. I hypothesized my unhappiness stemmed from my differentness, my absolute and uncompromising defiance of peoples' visions of what I should be. I was happy to be singular, but I thought maybe it came at too high a price. I was tired of being the outcast.

When I was myself, I never felt like myself. No matter what was good in my life, I was depressed.

It was after I'd finished four long, miserable years of high school that I decided to try something different. All my life, I had written stories from male perspectives, concealed my name and gender online, and rebelled against all things feminine. When I went to college, I would become a girl. Maybe I would find myself.

I managed to find female role models in people like "The X-Files'" Dana Scully, France's Joan of Arc, and many kick-ass female characters in animé. After a while, I managed to establish my own feminine style. I could achieve a likeable aesthetic in the mirror's reflection, but it was as if I were my own dress-up doll. There was a pretty girl there. I liked her clothes. I liked how they looked on her. I liked the curvy, artistic shape of her form, the braids in her hair— but who was that, and where the hell was I?

I didn't understand a lot of things about the way females thought. I hoped it made me cool to be a girl who didn't act like the average girl; this was my sole source of comfort. I think it made me strange. I didn't like the way I was received by others any more than I had in the past. I gained more attention, but it was a disconcerting form of interest. Everything felt superficial and distorted: both myself and the way others reacted to what they perceived me to be. I started to self-destruct.

The path to self destruction is a slow and painful degradation of the self. For me, it began with an absence of self-esteem and enough self-revulsion to manifest incredible demons. My own inner voice calmly guiding me deeper into the black hole in my head. It was a monster at my back, grinding me into the floor with the weight of one enormous clawed hand; it was strips of cold and thorny metal wire coiling through my veins and choking my heart. It was an inability to concentrate, a deep and unwavering ache.

One day I was looking something up on a website and noticed a promotional button with an attractive illustration. I clicked on the link and immersed myself in the work of a popular web comic. Then one day I visited the site's interactive forum and posted a comment.

I was accustomed to having my comments ignored. I didn't plan on becoming a regular, but someone did respond. For some reason, I found people there who played off me well. Before long, I had managed to become part of the group and participating on a regular basis. It was playful, fun and it made me smile.

Then one day several members of the board were online at once. Someone proposed that we relocate to a chat room, and so we did. There were several girls, one guy, and myself. Suddenly, it was proposed that the boys put on a show. "But we need some more boys," I said. "Well, we have you and me," he replied.

I can't describe how happy I was that these people, who only knew me through my words, believed me male. I had no desire to correct them. I concluded it unnecessary, since I didn't really know them and likely never would. I assumed I'd be forgotten by the next day.

Instead, the chat room exploits made me more infamous. I was called (nick) name and "he" and "him" right and left. Still, I opted to refrain from comment on the determination of my gender. But rather than to assume a role, I remained myself—only myself magnified. Everything I was innately inexplicably went up a notch: my sense of humor, my assertiveness. It was like someone had turned up the volume. I was enjoying who I was with these people, immensely.

What I didn't expect was to become friends with them; that had never happened before. I became increasingly close to one boy in particular. He treated "us" like more than a friendship. Starved for those feelings, I gradually developed a deep affection for him in spite of myself.

The more intimate we became, of course, the more I feared the discovery of my secret. Suddenly, I realized my newfound friendships were doomed by the reality I'd hidden. The pain in my chest returned. Darkness scraped at the edges of my vision. I started to forget who I was. I found myself incapable of mustering the spirit of the alter ego I'd created online.

Finally, the relationship broke down. There was nothing left but to be honest about what had derailed me.

Naturally, he accused me of lies and deception. He insisted I come clean to every one of my friends, who were his friends also. This was to be my penance. If paid, he wrote, he desired for things to remain the same between us. But things could not be the same. The dynamic had changed. I was the kind of guy he wanted, but not the kind of girl.

Meanwhile, being treated as a girl, I felt dead inside. I retreated into myself again. My friends forgave me, but I couldn't recover from the vile, loathsome truth. Why did the so-called "truth" undo me? Why did the truth stifle and shut me down? Why did I feel REAL and whole living the lie? Why did the truth feel like the TRUE lie?

In a downward spiral, I researched the best method of killing myself. I had no desire for anything. I couldn't get out of bed. My parents looked at me with fear and disappointment, stabbing me through to the soul. I wanted to go away. I wanted to stop feeling anything, since life had become pure and uninterrupted pain.

I probably would have killed myself had I not witnessed my mother's grief at the death of her sister. If only I could die without causing her undeserved grief! If only she'd realize it was worse having such a worthless child.

Sometimes I managed to get out of bed and write in my journal or read the journals of my friends. In the journal of my closest friend I found a comment from a stranger. Curious, I traced him back to his own journal and there encountered the following sentiment:

To all those who wake up tomorrow, who look into the mirror and see a girl, and are spoken to as girls, and feel like girls; and to all those who wake up tomorrow and look into the mirror and have a boy looking back at them, and are spoken to as boys, and feel like boys.... none of you have the slightest idea how lucky you are. Be a little grateful, once in a while.

He was four years my junior, and transsexual.

I didn't understand. All I could think was that to wake up as a girl, to see a girl in the mirror, to be spoken to as a girl, and to feel like a girl physically were an unspeakable and irresolvable horror. I contested his comment and requested that he elaborate. This began an exchange that was later relocated to instant messaging conversation. We had a freakishly bizarre number of things in common and communicated easily. I told him of the recent events in my life, and found him sympathetic.

He articulated the motivation behind his entry. He was four years my junior, and transsexual. He explained his feelings and the nature of gender identity disorder. I understood it implicitly—but I still didn't understand how gender transition was possible.

Because of my encounter and subsequent friendship with this 19-year-old transsexual, and because of my best friend's insights on the subject, I did intensive research on transsexualism. I read everything I could get hold of about the process of transitioning, as well as articles written by experts in psychology and mental health and countless personal accounts of transsexuals.

Most transsexuals I uncovered in my research were in their twenties, like myself. Some were in their teens. Others were older, married and well established. And then there were parents of small children already exhibiting signs of transsexualism. None of the people I found were rich, and all of them had gone to incredible lengths to achieve transition.

Listening to the evolving voice clips of female-to-male transsexuals, I got a lump in my throat and a furious, burning intensity in my chest. I started to think the solution to my problem might not be out of my grasp after all. I started to think it might be better to be a biologically incomplete male than an incomplete male in a complete female body. I began to feel that the pain of that differentness might be preferable to the pain of this one.

I had tried to accept myself as a female and failed. I had tried to be accepted as male and been inhibited by my body. I wasn't happy to be treated as a masculine female when I felt more like a moderately feminine male. I hated my voice. I hated my face. I hated my breasts and underdeveloped muscles, which I exercised twice as much as my brother.

If I could finally feel that much more at home in my body, if I could finally be treated like one of the guys instead of a tomboy, life might feel worth living again, and all this gender shit could finally stop dominating my consciousness.

The ideal I held for myself was unobtainable within the boundaries of female biology, but with the prospect of transition, a light appeared upon the black horizon. I began to picture my future again. I again began to feel motivated to move forward. I began to believe my dream could come true. I could continue to aspire to become the person I wanted to be, both in body and spirit. And someday I could wear my favorite man's overshirt and look like a man and not a girl in mens' clothes. Someday I could finally be me not just in my mind's eye, but in everyone's.

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"I Hate Transsexuals!"

by Jaime Ray

More than one person I have talked to recently has expressed this sentiment—but wait! These same people are dealing with a trans issue of their own. What's up with that?

It seems a common denominator among many people who have their sights set upon transitioning between the sexes or who are transition-curious is a repulsion toward others who are either partway or already on the other side of sex reassignment. At first, I thought repulsion was too strong a word or would be more appropriately associated with those people who had a moral conviction against the idea of changing one's sex. Wouldn't hatred aimed at people who are transsexual be more likely from a homophobic or transphobic individual desiring to rid the world of the transsexual scourge?

I listened carefully as people explained as best they could these honest and difficult feelings. Mixed together with a disdain for others in the same categories were guilt and shame they would turn on others who, like themselves, were doing the best they could to right a deeply-felt personal wrong.

"I just don't identify transsexual. I'm a girl," said one 19-year-old MTF. "Those people, some of them much older than me, look like men in dresses, ew!" She scrunched up her nose as she came too close to her own uncomfortable feelings.

She continued. "I know I have a penis and facial hair, but I'm a girl. I haven't had sex with a woman or fathered a child. I just think it's different for someone like me."

Many young people would agree with her perception—and perhaps it's true that to a degree not just genetics or hormones, but also life experience and achievement shape a person's gender identity. I listened to her carefully as she continued.

"I don't like to listen to men in dresses talking about their divorces and problems with child support. It's not for me to understand how they feel or what they're going through. I'm a young girl trying to pull my life together. I guess there's just too much that stands between us for me to relate to where they're coming from. It grosses me out!" She sank in her seat, feeling guilty for strong emotions that were surprising even her.

I realized this young person was experiencing real pain. I wanted to say, "Its OK, sweetheart. You don't have to talk to scary people if you don't want to. It's your right to choose who you want as your friends or who you allow close to you."

I realized that I was talking to a very young girl, perhaps younger than her chronological age might suggest (another hallmark of the transgender's developmental sketch). Who could blame such a young woman for trying to retain her innocence and deliver her inner child safely into a more normal adulthood, free from the conflicts and strife found in the lives of so many transgendered people—particularly those with more experience than she has had living in the natal gender role.

What becomes apparent is that some people with gender identity disorder don't identify with the movement or community as captured by the terms transgender or transsexual. Instead, they self-identify in more specific terms: "I'm a female with an anatomical error." Of course, this discussion is inclusive of the FTM population, as FTMs may also experience similar feelings about their masculine identities.

The Internet has facilitated many young people, who assume an identity and sex role that runs its course unchecked. They may not even participate in any trans communities, feeling instead that it would be more appropriate for them to associate only with communities of people born to the genetic group to which they feel they belong.

So, how does the world become a safer place for post-op men and women who have gone this route and not participated in Pride parades or LGBT community centers or the litigations associated with the gender rights movement? If everyone were to slip into the sex and gender role to which they ascribe, while the world is left none the wiser, wouldn't the world still have all the same ignorance, prejudice, and discrimination?

Where do young people with a gender conflict find support for the many issues they must navigate? Surely a chat room filled with high school-aged females from a local soccer team can't offer much in the way of insight to a transsexual peer who has to sort out the complexities of a first day of transition at the locker room. Are individual sessions with a gender therapist enough? What about all the young people from families who can't even afford a therapist?

The 19-year-old continued, "In an ideal world, I would have been able to transition as a young child and attend school in my correct gender and sex. Nobody would need to know. I don't want to go through even a portion of my adult life with male body parts or a man's life and role."

What will happen when our young friend grows up and is dating or newly wed? Will she possess the skills and experience to live out of her closet? Transsexuals who are not out are living a life of stealth, which many describe as terrifying. Looking over their shoulder, they express fears such as, "What if someone one day finds out," or "What will my partner say when they find out from a family member or when my past comes back to haunt us?"

Some gender activists who comment on such strategies have said individuals who go stealth have jumped from one closet to the next. The best way to live is honestly and in acceptance of who and what we are, and that should be OK in society. Exchanging one lie for another, going forward in denial of our past, is both unnecessary and dangerous.

Still, while so much hostility and violence prevails in much of society toward transgendered people, who could blame these men and women for living in stealth or disidentifying with and distancing themselves from the trans community? Maybe one day the world will be different, and, because of those who are fighting to win acceptance and the human rights battle, a safe place for a future generation of transsexual youth who can proudly wear that label for as long as it applies, and then fit in with the other members of their felt gender and sex.

Inside the Democratic National Convention

by Monica F. Helms

In 2000, only one openly transgendered person attended the Democratic National Convention. Her name: Jane Fee. She broke the trans barrier for the Democratic Party and made history, just as Chuck Yeager did when he broke the sound barrier more than fifty years earlier. The world rejoiced when Yeager went faster than sound, and our community rejoiced when Fee helped to educate the world on transgendered people.

In the late 1950s, NASA selected seven men to go into space. They were the seven original astronauts. The extensive training they endured showed that they all had the "right stuff" to become America's first astronauts. In 2004, seven transgendered women became the first Transgender Caucus to the DNC, because they, too, had the "right stuff."

This may sound pretentious, but it's interesting to see history repeating itself, if in a strange way. (It's also interesting to note that at the convention I got to shake hands with one of the seven original astronauts, John Glenn. I told him he was one of my heroes, and that the space program made me decide to join the Navy.)

The seven transgendered people in the delegation included myself, Vanessa Edwards Foster and Cristina Ocasio from Texas, Barbara "Babs" Casbar from New Jersey, Kathy Padilla and Mara Keisling from Pennsylvania, and Melissa Sklarz from New York. Another individual from Maine was elected, but she could not go because of a family emergency. Also attending was Roslyn Manley from California. She would have been a delegate for Howard Dean, but because he didn't get 3% of the vote in the primary, she couldn't represent him. Instead, she went as a reporter.

Many on the transgender lists wrote about the events leading up to the convention, specifically the DNC Platform. A week before the Platform Committee met for the last time, the transgendered delegates became aware that wording didn't cover the three million transgendered people estimated to live in the United States. We scrambled to formulate an amendment to the platform that would add gender identity next to the words sexual orientation. This would be done with the help of Scott Safier, a gay delegate from Pennsylvania.

The day before the Platform Committee met, the DNC informed us there would not be enough votes to pass the amendment. They requested that as a show of unity, we withdraw the amendment. At the Platform Committee meeting, televised on C-SPAN, Scott Safier read the following:

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee, I rise today to give voice to a community with no member at today's meeting and invisible in our platform. I am speaking of the transgender community.

Our platform touches on many issues important to the trans-community, from education to health care to hate crimes and workplace discrimination. This issue, important to us all, has particular resonance in a community that is misunderstood, often maligned, and whose members live in fear of violence and discrimination.

Our platform says that hate crimes "demean good people." Gwen Araujo, Pvt. Barry Winchell, and Brandon Tina were not just "demeaned," they were murdered by individuals who saw no value in their humanity.

Transgender people are good citizens who make valuable contributions to their communities. Gender identity and gender expression are no basis to deny anyone a job, housing, an education, or adequate medical care. These are mainstream issues, as Governor Vilsack's own executive order in his home state demonstrates.

The transgender community understands that the Democratic Party's commitment to civil rights is "ironclad." Because of this Party's outreach efforts, there will be at least eight transgender delegates in Boston, an increase of 800% in eight years, but more can be done. As a gay man, I can only be a surrogate for this distinct community, speaking second-hand in telling their stories and discussing their issues. We must do more to make certain that they themselves are included at the table.

Mr. Chairman, I am instructed by the transgender delegates to tell this committee that the trans-community stands united behind the Kerry/Edwards ticket and will work for a Democratic victory in November. At the request of the trans-delegation, and in recognition of this solidarity, I have been asked to withdraw this amendment, and do so now.

Thank you for your time.

When I saw Scott's speech on C-SPAN, I cried. All of us in the transgender delegation felt disappointed, but also proud that Scott acknowledged us in such a wonderful fashion. Even though we did not get the language into the platform, we made progress.

It has been only four years since the first openly transgendered delegate attended a Democratic Convention. I wonder how long it took between the time the first openly gay man or lesbian attended a convention and sexual orientation found its way into the Platform. As we all know, Rome wasn't built in a day. Our time will come, and we will be fully embraced by the Democratic Party.

Even though we didn't have a snowball's chance in hell of getting language into the platform, the seven of us received nasty comments from some others in the community, accusing us of caving and selling out. Others chastised the DNC, wrote scathing articles, and probably wrote nasty letters to the DNC. Our comments to some of these people in trying to explain what really happened were met with even nastier responses. For all practical purpose, some considered us liars. It wasn't pretty.

The seven of us went to the convention knowing we would be there to educate politicians and other delegates on our issues. From the morning breakfast meetings for our individual states' delegation to the final gavel of the convention each evening, we interacted with many people. Each of us wore our Transgender Delegate button, purchased especially for us by Babs Casbar. The buttons became one of the hottest items at the convention, since Babs only had 200 made. They were the first of their kind. We could trade three or four other buttons for one

of them. Special people received them for free. Along with giving someone a button came education on transgender issues.

On Monday of the convention, the first of two GLBT caucuses took place. In frustration, we sat through several speeches where the speaker would say only "gay and lesbian." It got to the point where we were about ready to hold up hand-made signs that said "Say B & T." A former Lieutenant General by the name of Claudia Kennedy also said just "gay and lesbian" in her speech. I had the chance later to give her my TAVA card and remind her that bisexual and transgendered people had also served. She thanked me for our service. Again, education took center stage, and it worked.

Even though we didn't have a snowball's chance in hell of getting language into the platform, the seven of us received nasty comments from others in the community, accusing us of caving and selling out.

Toward the end of the Monday GLBT Caucus, the main speaker stood up once again and pointed us out. We received a thunderous applause. At the end, three non-trans delegates stood to ask GLBT leadership why the DNC left transgender people out of a lot their policies and the Platform. It felt nice to see non-trans people stand up for us in this setting.

A funny incident happened on the day Cheryl Jacques, the Executive Director of HRC, was to speak from the podium. A rumor started somewhere that once Cheryl began to speak, a demonstration would take place on the floor in front of the podium. Of course, the seven transgendered delegates became the primary suspects in starting such a demonstration. I received a phone call from Mara Keisling asking if I knew anything about it. I did not. She pointed out that the DNC had sent federal marshals onto the floor to squelch any demonstration and said to enter the floor with caution.

From my vantage point, I saw the marshals assembling. Cheryl's speech went off without a hitch, while the seven transgender delegates watched quietly from their seats, some not even knowing anything about what was going on. We all had a good laugh about the fuss we made just by being there.

I guess HRC felt a bit touchy after getting slammed by many GLBT people for uninviting Margaret Choe from a unity event Monday night. It seems they felt her material might have been "too political" and they decided unilaterally to not have her appear. They did this in spite of the fact that several other organizations co-sponsored the event. (The transgendered delegates decided not to attend the event because of HRC's arrogance).

During the convention, the transgendered delegates crisscrossed the Boston area, attending events in different places within the city. At times, we separated to do our own things, and at other times we all came together to take part in something important. One of these important events took place on Wednesday, when we gave Scott Safier the first ever "Jane Fee Award." It was a rush job, but we pulled it off. The award read:

> *The Jane Fee Award, presented to Scott Safier, from the Transgender Delegation to the 2004 Democratic National Convention. We wish to thank you for giving us a voice and carrying our message to the DNC Platform Committee. This award is in recognition of your outstanding work on our behalf. Presented July 28, 2004.*

Scott looked on the verge of tears when he received it. This will be a rare award, given every four years to a person at the Democratic National Convention who goes out of their way to help transgendered people.

The last time we all came together we attended a meeting on Thursday with a group of people associated with the Kerry campaign. Three non-delegates attended. We presented issues that most affect the transgender community, such as unemployment, violence, health care, and veterans' issues. We also discussed other issues to help the transgender community.

During the course of the meeting, one of us asked the others to raise their hands and show how many of us knew someone who had lost their job due to discrimination. We all raised our hands. Many of us know dozens of people who have lost their jobs, and a few in the room had experienced it first hand. Another person asked how many of us knew somebody who had been murdered due to a hate crime. More than half of us—myself included— raised our hands. Despite the high incidence of hate crimes perpetrated against transgendered people, we still find ourselves left out of federal legislation. I felt that we got our point across.

We also had the chance to point out that Al Gore supposedly lost Florida in 2000 by 527 votes, and there are definitely more transgendered voters than that in Florida. We also mentioned the three million transgendered Americans nationwide and the possibility of one million registered voters. This showed that courting our votes could mean the difference in a close race. If Al Gore had done so in 2000, he would be President today.

Before we left, one individual indicated that she would like more information on the problems facing transsexual veterans within the Veteran's Administration. Some of our veterans don't receive the same services other veterans receive.

During the course of the convention, I met, talked, and shook hands with several people. Besides John Glenn, I spoke with Carole King, Howard Dean, Al Sharpton, Jerry Springer, Rep. Tammy Baldwin, Rep. Barney Frank, and Rep. John Lewis. Far and away, the most important person I got to shake hands with was former President Jimmy Carter. He spoke to the Georgia delegates at our Wednesday breakfast, and I was thrilled. When he was leaving the room, I got to shake his hand and said, "You and I have something in common."

President Carter asked, "What is that?"

"We are both submariners." His eyes glowed and he flashed that big Jimmy Carter smile.

In 2000, Jane Fee could be in only one place at a time and educate only one per-

son or one group at a time. With seven of us in 2004, we spread out the education, covered more people, participated in more caucuses, saw more things, and were more visible than ever before.

But, that isn't good enough. We all hope to see as many as twenty openly transgendered people at the 2008 DNC. It would be nice to have out crossdressers as well as female-to-male transsexuals. To help that become a reality, the seven of us will be contributing our experiences and suggestions on how to become a delegate so more of us will be there in 2008. We will also get information from those in our community who tried to be delegates, but didn't make it for whatever reasons. What they experienced will be just as valuable as what the seven of us experienced. I plan to do my best to be at the 2008 Democratic National Convention. Will you?

It is your editor's finest wish that we could have run a similar article on the Republican National Convention —Ed.

Roslyn Monley from California.

The Transgender Delegation meeting with members of the Kerry campaign.

Kathy Padilla.

The Jane Fee Award, presented to Scott Safier,

Jerry! Jerry! Jerry!

by Monica F. Helms

Of all the people I met while at the Democratic National Convention in Boston, far and away the most controversial was Jerry Springer. Jerry has become one of the most hated men on the face of this planet—by transgendered people, at least. The Springer show has done more to set back our movement than any other one thing— and not just once or twice, but hundreds of times. On a regular basis, pre-operative transsexual lovers seem to fool their sex partners into thinking, for months or years at a time, that they are genetic men or women. Reality does not play a part in his show.

When I lived in Phoenix, I recall, a friend decided to be on his show— just for grins. They gave her and a couple of others a script to follow, and from there, "T" reality went the way of the Model T. My friend gave the producer my phone number. When I got a call from him, I told him where he could stick his show.

Like most other humans, Springer is not the two-dimensional cartoon character depicted on his show. He has a multi-faceted personality, way beyond the ringmaster of sleaze, as seen on television. At one time, he served on the City Council of Cincinnati, but had to resign because of sexual improprieties. However, the citizens liked him so much that despite that, they elected him Mayor. In 2004, he decided to run for Senate in Ohio, but withdrew because he said he had too many other things on his plate.

His political past and popularity allowed him to be elected to the DNC as a delegate from Ohio.

Much has been written about Springer's liberal beliefs, including support for equal rights. Before the convention, Tucker Carlson had Springer as a guest on the May 25, 2004 CNN show "Crossfire." Carlson thought he could get Springer to make snide comments about the transgendered delegates to the Convention. Here's that part of the transcript:

CARLSON: Now, you're a delegate from Ohio. And as you probably know, the Democratic Party in many states has set up a strict quota system requiring that a certain number of delegates be transsexuals, transvestites.

SPRINGER: Yes.

CARLSON: Men dressed as women. (CROSSTALK)

CARLSON: And that's true. I'm not making it up. You can't make up a lot of this stuff. I'm wondering, given that, if you think when you get to the convention, you'll see a lot of people there who have been on your show? (LAUGHTER)

SPRINGER: Well, I guess— I used to be a woman. (LAUGHTER)

CARLSON: Really?

SPRINGER: Yes. I used to be. (CROSSTALK)

CARLSON: You look better as a man, no offense or anything.

SPRINGER: Yes. I used to be Sally Jesse Raphael. (LAUGHTER)

SPRINGER: I— I don't know. Yes, you know, look, the Democratic Party has tried for the last— at least last 30 years that I've been paying attention to it, to represent the entire culture. I think that's important. I think when you take a look and you watch on television the Republican Convention, virtually everyone sitting out there in delegates looks alike.

CARLSON: Fewer transvestites, definitely.

SPRINGER: Well, also fewer minorities. Also, you know— it's clearly a white male party.

CARLSON: OK.

It appears that Springer had fun with Carlson, pointing out that the Democratic Party supports all minorities, while the Republican Party is run mostly by white men.

Knowing that "Jerry, Jerry, Jerry" would be at the convention presented me with a unique opportunity to turn the tables on him and become the first transsexual to interview him. The task was daunting, at best. Springer didn't spend a lot of time on the floor, so catching him became one of timing. The opportunity presented itself on the last day of the convention, before the prime time speeches began.

The Ohio delegation was located about as far from the Georgia section as it could be and still be inside the Fleet Center. I made my way through the maze of people, arriving just in time to see Jerry besieged by people asking him questions. I knew it would be difficult, but my determination to succeed never wavered. To get extra responses from Springer, I placed my recorder close to him while others asked him questions. Each person got to ask one or two questions, and that was it. Mariette Pathy Allen arrived just in time to get some candid shots of me "interviewing" Jerry.

Here are the first two questions. Both can easily pertain to the transgender community.

REPORTER: There has been a lot of apathy amongst the Massachusetts voters who are saying that John Kerry is going to carry the vote there and that youth voters are not so willing to go out and vote. I was wondering if I can get a few words and comment from you on that?

SPRINGER: Well, I think that in the end young people will come out and vote, because probably for the first time in almost a generation, young people recognize that the decisions that have been made in Washington are really affecting their lives. They're the ones that are fighting and dying in Iraq. They're the ones who all of a sudden can't afford to go to college, or they have their college loans up to their ears. They're the ones who can't find jobs when they graduate, or when they get jobs, they don't pay that well, or they don't have benefits. And, what's going to happen to their pension? I mean, all of a sudden, politics is not just a hobby, it's not just something they study in school. It is, in fact, what our lives are all about. And I think that more young people are seeing this and that's why we're getting the activism that we perhaps didn't have ten or fifteen years ago.

REPORTER: Is there anything about the youth in Ohio that needs to be talked about?

SPRINGER: Well, Ohio is a poster child for what the policies of this administration have done to America. We're the state where all the jobs have left. We lost over 250,000 jobs since Bush became President. We have lost even more since January. It affects young people, because they're graduating, they're looking to get jobs. They're not going to find them here in Ohio. A young person graduates, and you know what happens? They go to Atlanta. They go to Chicago, New York, LA, San Francisco. They're not sticking around in Ohio. More 18- to 34-year-olds are leaving Ohio than any other state in the Union. We're hurting. We've got to find a way to turn this economy around so employers will stay in Ohio, not export the jobs overseas, be able to provide decent wages and decent benefits, to start to have health insurance for all Americans. That ought to be a right. This is the 21st Century. Not a privilege. A right! More people died from cancer then died from bombs in America. So therefore we better start doing something about making sure everyone has health insurance. And, that's what young people have to be concerned about.

(I included that piece because Jerry, Jerry, Jerry spoke about the concerns of young people, the economy, and health insurance, three things affecting the transgender community. Then, I got my chance to ask him a question).

HELMS: I have to say that your appearance on Crossfire, you definitely took Tucker Carlson to task when he made comments about the transgendered delegates.

SPRINGER: Yes.

HELMS: Would you care to make any additional comments in that respect?

SPRINGER: Well, as a general rule of life, never ever, ever, ever judge someone by what they are. You judge someone only by what they do. If we can live by that rule, then we won't be discriminatory. We won't be racists. We won't be anti-gay. In other words, what you do, I can make a judgment about, but I'll never judge you based on what you are. Okay?

So much for my short contact with Jerry Springer. He looked as if he felt tired with all of the reporters and turned to sit in his chair. I got the impression that even though everyone knew him as a celebrity, he came to the convention only as a delegate from Ohio. I didn't change my views of him, because I've felt for the longest time that his show doesn't reflect the true person. I still don't appreciate some of the content of his show, but I'm willing to separate the man from the sleaze-show icon. Whether others will do that will be up to them.

Well, as a general rule of life, never ever, ever, ever judge someone by what they are. You judge someone only by what they do.

Mission Accomplished

by Monica F. Helms

On May 1, 2003, President Bush landed on the aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln. With a banner that read "Mission Accomplished" behind him, he told the world the war in Iraq had been won. However, the fighting didn't stop, and many more troops have died since then in that war we were supposed to have won.

On May 1, 2004, a year later, 50 transgendered veterans gathered at the Vietnam Memorial—as planned—to heal from Vietnam and other wars. In the afternoon, four transgendered veterans laid a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknowns—also as planned—and made history. The planners for the first-ever Transgender Veterans March to the Wall were truly able to say, "Mission accomplished."

The idea for this march began three years ago, as a vision. Angela Brightfeather had it after spending many hours in a sweat lodge in North Carolina. She passed that vision onto me in September of 2001, at a time when she and I were coming to an increased understanding of the importance of veterans in the transgender community. Later, we formed the Veterans Affairs Committee of NTAC, and the vision continued to grow.

In January of 2003, the national organization Transgender American Veterans Association (TAVA) became a reality, and Angela was voted in as the Special Projects Director. This board position was created with the idea that TAVA would eventually fulfill her vision of a reunion and march of transgender veterans in our nation's capitol.

Only nine months after TAVA came into existence, Angela set a date for this historical event. I have to admit, I was scared. So many things needed to fall into place, so many things could go wrong. I had never organized an event like this, but Angela had helped to organize a Harley Riders Ride to the Wall. Thousands of Harley riders came to that event.

Only nine months after TAVA came into existence, Angela set a date for this historical event.

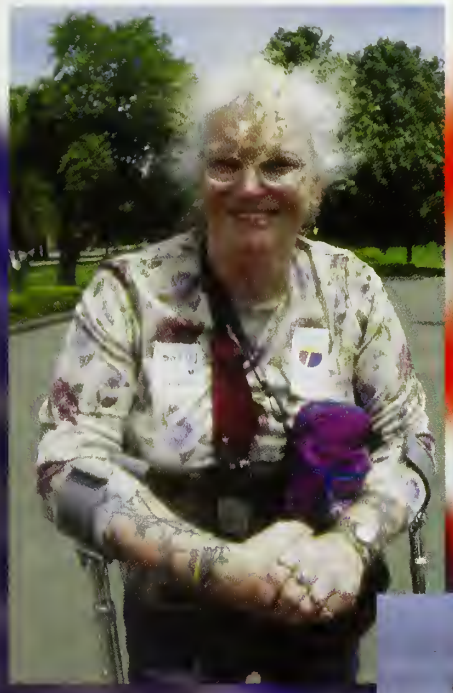
Before letting the public, or even TAVA members know of our intentions, a group of us worked to get important things in place. We received the help of the Transgender Fund to allow tax-exempt donations, and the support of several outside groups, who selected the hotel, put up a web site, and arranged other essentials. Then we went public.

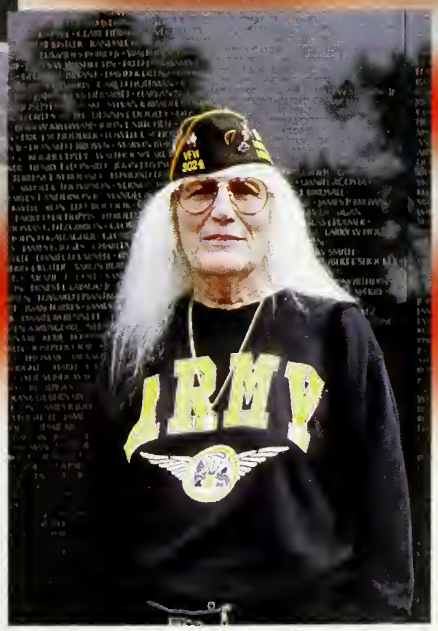
Whenever an idea is submitted to the transgender population at large, there are detractors. We had ours, as well. However, with so many things already in place, we had answers to pressing questions. One person said it wouldn't be a success if we didn't get a lot of attendance. Angela and I stated that we would consider it a success if she and I were the only two who attended. Others were worried about people dressing flamboyantly, or the event becoming a media circus. We pointed out that we are veterans, and, as such, understand the need to be respectful at the Wall.

As the March progressed, we added another important event to the day. We sent out the proper request letters to the appropriate people and received permission to lay a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknowns. No other known group of transgendered people had ever laid a wreath at this most revered place in our country. Things were shaping up. This would not only be a historical event for our community, but one for the whole country.

I have to admit, the stress of this event took its toll on me. Many times, Angela was there to help calm me down and quell my fears. I made it in one piece, thanks to her.

The National Center for Transgender Equality, headed by Mara Keisling, helped tremendously in making the March possible. As we gathered in





Top left is Dione Murdock. Top right hos (from L to R) Phyllis Frye, Jone Fee, Alex Fox, Angelo Brightfeother. Bottom left: Robyn Wolters. Bottom middle: Dorlene Strouch. Bottom right: Jone Fee.

The daughter of one of the attendees, Abigail Eileen Forester, wrote a poem because she was so moved by the events of that day.

Price of a Tear
By Abigail Eileen Forester
May 1, 2004

Price of a tear,
value of life,
war-torn countries
riddled with strife.

Brother, neighbor,
enemy, friend
each name represents
pain without end.

Thoughts, impressions,
memories untold,
unseen fears, the call to be
bold.

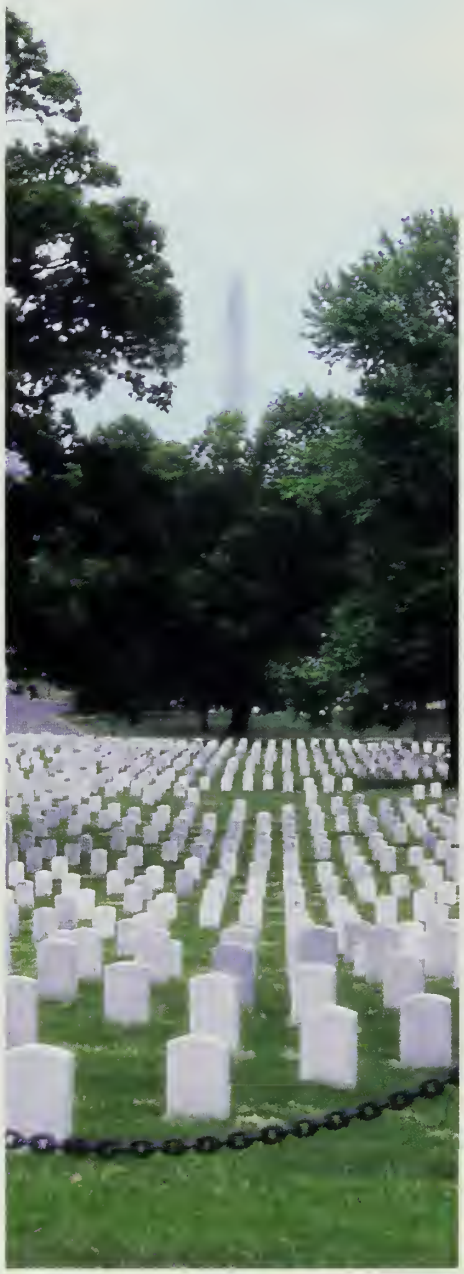
Onward, upward
a soldier's cry,
Pleas for mercy,
no wish to die.

Prayers for safety,
prayers for relief,
bittersweet moments,
long-lasting grief.

Price of a tear,
debt paid in full,
each life given freely
courageous young souls.

Price of a tear.

Tears flowed like rain on a summer day. No one was unaffected, whether they had fought in a war or not.



Washington on Friday, April 30th, NCTE provided refreshments for our welcoming reception. They did a fantastic job—not only at the reception, but in helping to coordinate many aspects of the event. That night, we selected the four people who would have the honor of laying the wreath at the Tomb the next day. They were Carol Krohn, Charlene Walsh, Sara Gibson, and TAVA's Vice-President, Stephanie Heck.

Everything fell into place that day, happening with true military precision—thanks to Angela. She is, after all, a former Field First Drill Sergeant and was used to this sort of thing. The day began exactly as planned when the bus arrived and took the 50 participants to the Wall. What we didn't plan on was a police escort from Sgt. Brett Parsons, the GLBT liaison for the Metro Police Department. He had the lights flashing on his squad car, and even stopped to direct people out of our way. He made us feel like VITs— Very Important Trannies.

We arrived at the Vietnam Memorial right on time. This was the entire reason we came. Angela and I knew many veterans in our community needed a special chance to heal from that war and the others we fought in, and the Wall is a very special healing place. In our group were veterans of conflicts ranging from World War II to the first Gulf War, from ages 27 to 77. They had all come to be there with their fellow transgender veterans.

Tears flowed like rain on a summer day. No one was unaffected, whether they had fought in a war or not. Spouses, significant others, and children cried alongside the veterans. We were truly one community at that moment.

Many things in my life have moved me, but this moment in time had no equal. It changed us all, it gave us the strength we needed to go on. But, it wouldn't be the last time we cried together that day.

In the early afternoon, the group visited the Iwo Jima memorial, also known as the Marine Memorial, where we took photos. Once again, Sgt Parsons gave us a police escort. Later, we all rode to Arlington National Cemetery. The four veterans who would lay the wreath at the Tomb were already there, waiting.

A moment of panic set in when I received a call from Stephanie Heck, who

said they couldn't find the wreath. Angela tried calling the florist, while I tried to talk to Stephanie in a bad cellular reception area. When we arrived at the Tomb, we found the wreath was there. One of the guards hadn't seen it at first.

Standing behind the railing that kept the crowds from interfering with the Tomb guards, we waited, watching the precise movements of the soldiers as they walked their post. Then, with the precision of a Swiss watch, the Master Sergeant of the Guard came out and announced loudly, "This wreath is being presented by the Transgender American Veterans Association." The four selected transgender veterans marched out and were met by the guard holding the wreath. The front two veterans took hold of the wreath and, with the help of the guard, placed it on the stand. Another guard played Taps.

No one could hold back the tears that moment. The strength and beauty of our community shone through. One young girl asked one of our members if she was a veteran, and our member said, "Yes."

"Are you part of a group?" "Yes, the Transgender American Veterans Association. This was the first time transgendered veterans have laid a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier."

The girl then said, "Wow. You mean I got to see history being made?"

She indeed did, as did we all.

The event ended with a dinner at the hotel, where people processed their feelings. Emotions had run high all weekend. The dinner was a wonderful end to a wonderful day.

We have been asked if we will be doing this again next year. We can't say for sure, but many want to go again, and others want to go for the first time. TAVA will be deciding on that at a later date, probably by the time you read this article. What began as a vision in a Native-American sweat lodge has become a source of pride for all transgendered people, especially the veterans.

This was the first time transgendered veterans had laid a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

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Should GID be Taken Out of the DSM-IV?

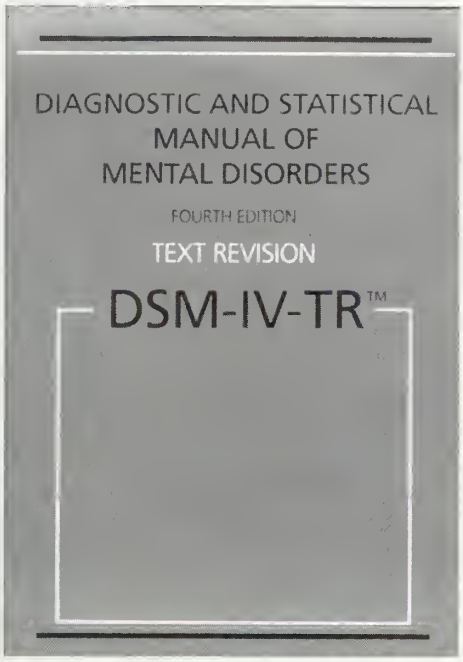
by Michaela Lamb

In 1973, homosexuality was taken out of the DSM and was no longer seen by the American Psychiatric Association as a psychological condition. Today, there is a movement among transgendered and transsexual activists who want Gender Identity Disorder removed from the DSM-IV. They don't want the stigma of being seen as crazy because of their gender identity. But there's a difference between GID and homosexuality: gays and lesbians don't need the help of the medical community to be who they are, transsexuals and some transgendered persons do.

Removing GID from the psychiatric realm and jurisdiction will lead to a view of hormonal and surgical procedures as primarily elective in nature— cosmetic and medically unnecessary. Transsexualism will no longer be seen as a medical condition warranting medical treatment. This will be especially damaging for transsexuals and transgendered persons who are institutionalized in prisons or psychiatric hospitals or are on fixed incomes.

I understand the reasoning of those who want to depathologize Gender Identity Disorder, but there is political movement among social conservatives in this country who claim SRS and hormones are elective. This movement will grow as budgets continue to be cut. Removal from the DSM would be used by health insurance companies and states' Departments of Health to deny hormones and surgical procedures to those who require them. Most HMOs already deny such health care coverage. Removal will strengthen claims that these procedures are not medically necessary.

There is one benefit of having GID in the DSM—it allows physicians to advocate for us. The GID diagnosis backs up their claims that hormones and surgeries are medically needed for the well-being of transsexuals. If physicians no longer have the DSM to support this position, it's possible that the medical community will no longer be as supportive. I agree



that the pathology of GID has not done much for our community, but it was a catalyst for gender clinics and research into transsexual medicine.

Conservative political ideologues may use removal from the DSM as an opportunity to turn back the progress made over the past forty years in the medical treatment of transsexualism and transgender medicine in general. The real problem here is that there are people who are looking for any reason to discriminate and support their prejudices against transsexual and transgendered people.

Some transsexual and transgender people want GID out of the DSM because it is used to stigmatize and discriminate against them. There is still a real stigma in our society concerning psychological conditions. This issue boils down to the fact that transgendered people don't want to be stigmatized because their gender identity is labeled as a mental illness—yet we must understand that transsexualism is a mental health, social, and legal issue.

One can argue that social policies in this country are dealt with by legal precedents and outcomes. Whether we like it or not, there are political forces at work that want to harm us, and forces that want to help us. Those who want to help us must have something to support their position.

At this time in history, transsexualism and transgenderism are considered to be psychological conditions—not really psychiatric illnesses, but rather conditions the health care professional must consider based upon the feelings and thoughts of those who claim they are not gender-congruent. Medical science has yet to conclude that transsexualism and transgenderism are physiological or neurological realities. Medical science can't at this time measure GID; therefore, it is left in the realm of psychiatric medicine.

If GID is taken out of the DSM, it may be more harmful than helpful. The transition process for transsexual and transgendered persons would be considered cosmetic and merely elective in nature, and anyone with money could do it. This could result in bad outcomes for some who would regret having gone through transition, and health care professionals might choose to not provide hormones and surgeries because they would view them as harmful. Medical malpractice attorneys would have a field day. Sex changes could become taboo or too controversial medically for the medical community.

I do believe transsexualism and transgenderism are biological and psychological phenomena and physical realities. It will take time before medical science can prove a physical condition that can be measured and proven to exist outside the mental health realm. Until then, we must be cautious not to alienate those who wish to help us, even if it requires a diagnosis in the DSM we must also consider the legal ramifications for those who are at the mercy of state and social institutions.

Michaela Lamb *a freelance writer, has been published in the G&L Review Worldwide and various other magazines and small newspapers. She writes about queer spirituality and issues in transsexual and transgender communities. She lives in western New York. To contact her by e-mail, write gnostikas13@yahoo.com.*

Androgyne Online

by Stephe Feldman

Twenty-five years ago, I became infatuated with David Bowie and resentful because I didn't look androgynous myself. Back then, I didn't realize I was indeed androgynous, because I had assumed one couldn't be androgynous without looking the part. I realize it now, and yet there is no literature to support my conclusions, only a grateful dozen or so people who have e-mailed me to say how my essay at Androgyne Online described them to a T.

The following, then, is a description of a type of transgendered person called androgyne—unsupported by academic rigor and scientific corroboration, yet warranted by the emergent visibility of a real class of people who fall outside the gender binarism of man and woman.

With the recent ascendancy of the term "genderqueer" threatening its currency, it has become necessary to explain the term and category of androgyne before it's too late. Androgyne has existed as a term in art history and religious studies for at least 200 years, and in alchemical circles for perhaps 500 years. Up until the last century, the term was used mostly to indicate hermaphrodism, but since in the abstract it was symbolic of unity and transcendence, it was related to androgyny, too.

Androgyne (pronounced ANDRA-jine), from the Greek for man/woman, can be a state of mind, not just an attitude or fashion statement. The notion that only androgynous-looking people can be or are androgynous is a misconception. Androgynes have the gender identity of both a man and a woman—or neither. Some identify with both traditional genders, while others see their identity as more of a synthesis and consider themselves agendered, other, or none of the above. Some even go as far as to claim Kate Bornstein's term gender outlaw. Out of all the categories of transgender, androgynes are the most misunderstood, because nearly everyone thinks one must decisively identify as either a man or a woman.

Having an androgynous appearance does not necessarily make a person an androgyne. The word androgynous can apply to both superficial and psychological characteristics, whereas the word androgyne pertains almost specifically to gender identity. Indeed, it can be said that all androgynes are psychologically androgynous but not all androgynous-looking people are androgynes. Much in the way that many transsexuals are transsexual without looking at all like the sex they perceive themselves to be, many androgynes are androgyne without looking the part. Unfortunately, most psychological androgynes do not understand who and what they are and they may agonize for years—if not their entire lives—wondering how it is they can feel androgynous if they don't look that way.

Psychological androgyny—which is basically just another way of referring to the state of being androgyne—can be maddening. Trying to display outwardly what is inside can be difficult, and the results are often interpreted by outsiders not as androgynous, but as novice cross-dresser or non-passing transsexual, i.e. the dreaded man in a dress. Being born with androgynous looks is one thing. Trying to make oneself appear to be androgynous is another. I myself can attest to this, I assure you.

Having an androgynous appearance does not necessarily make a person an androgyne.

Androgyny is a double-edged sword. While those born with androgynous looks—especially if they are not androgynes—often wish their gender presentation was unambiguous so as to not be teased, harassed, or mistaken for another sex, those psychological androgynes who are born without androgynous looks often wish their gender presentation was markedly ambiguous so as to convey outwardly what they feel inwardly. It amounts to a case of the metaphorical grass being greener on the other side of the fence, where psychological androgy-

nes and mono-gendered androgynous folk envy each other for attributes they do not share. Some fortunate souls, however, both look and feel androgynous.

Most androgynes don't realize their androgyne nature. This is because there isn't a lot of data on androgynes as yet; there are few studies, virtually no tabloid TV, and no movies on the subject, mostly because androgynes generally don't experience a mental breakdown or epiphany of self-realization like many transsexuals do where they suddenly decide they either have to live their lives as the opposite sex or do themselves in. Most androgynes live lives of quiet desperation, never realizing who and what they truly are: neither men nor women.

Sex, sexual orientation, and gender identity are three separate and different things. Sex refers to what's between your legs, while gender refers to what's between your ears. Since gender identity refers to how one views oneself, a person can consider themselves to be a man (masculine), a woman (feminine), or androgyne. It has been observed that since androgynes do not have a "gender-based opposite," they are therefore attracted to each other, and if this is so, it frees androgynes to be both tranny and trannychaser simultaneously. I suspect androgynes are predisposed toward trannychasing because they identify with neither or both traditional genders and therefore feel an affinity with people of mixed or unfixed gender and/or sex. This allows androgynes much freedom, and in a way lends weight to the term third gender, because since androgynes are neither men nor women, sexual orientation isn't really an issue.

This corresponds nicely with some intersex individuals' claims that intersex folk cannot be gay nor bisexual because they are neither male nor female—which is interesting because androgynes can be said to be the psychological counterpart to the intersexed. To reflect this, the term intergender(ed) has been coined and some people go even further, saying androgynes have intersexed brains.

In the transgender community, a lot of lip service is given to gender being a spectrum, continuum, or sphere, but in reality, these are little more than glib statements that all-too-few people question or otherwise examine. Transsexuals generally display a pattern of avoiding contact with and otherwise invalidating androgynes because they view androgyny as an intermediate stage (i.e, a necessary evil) in transsexual transitioning. Androgynes, by association, draw unwanted attention to possible self-perceived defects in transsexuals' gender presentations, and since most transsexuals want nothing more than to blend into the woodwork as their intended sex, this inevitably creates problems.

How does one determine whether or not one is androgyne?

That said, some transsexuals are androgyne but don't realize it due to pressure from within themselves and from the transsexual community. Although transsexuals tend to buy into the binary categories of man and woman even more than straight, non-gender-conflicted people buy into them, there is such a thing as an androgyne transsexual: a person who changes their physical sex or otherwise lives as their preferred sex, yet retains an androgyne identity. Discovering an underlying androgyne nature within themselves has caused some would-be transsexuals to drastically reevaluate their situation to the point of swearing off genital reassignment surgery. Other androgyne transsexuals decide to embrace their androgyne nature and live as transgenderists or hormone-enhanced non-operative transsexuals, and there are even those who proceed with genital reassignment surgery despite their realization—this needn't be viewed as a tragedy. It's a matter of one's sense of self.

How does one determine whether or not one is androgyne? It really boils down to what you yourself think. Do you consider yourself to have masculine character traits and feelings as well as feminine character traits and feelings to the extent you feel repressed if you deny either of these for any extended period of time? If so, you may well be androgyne.

While it is a common truism that no one is entirely masculine or entirely feminine, androgynes' feelings of identity run deeper than this. For them, it is not a vestigial or incidental overlap of traits, but an inherent, vital component of their being. In fact, once androgynes find themselves, masculinity and femininity often cease to be polarities for them.

There is the possibility that the term genderqueer might replace androgyne. The term is new (no more than four years old), has overt political and activist aspects, and—derived as it is from women's studies—is skewed towards college-educated female-born androgynes, but it might yet turn out to be little more than a euphemism for genderfuck. Androgynes as a whole don't wish to be any more confrontational than the next person, and that is perhaps the difference between androgynes and genderqueers.

Quite often, a stranger will view as confrontational an androgyne who is trying, perhaps unsuccessfully, to portray their inner self, but that is the stranger's own preconception superimposed onto what the androgyne is really doing, which is trying to be their true self in a world that assumes that there are only two categories of gender. Genderqueers, however, often appear driven to dismantle the gender binary categorically, so I think it might eventually prove necessary to distinguish between the genderqueer movement and individual genderqueers, much in the way Christianity as a whole is not indicative of individual Christians. In such a context, one might imagine androgynes as secular genderqueers.

Shorn of politics and radical agendas, androgynes are non-binary gender variants, plain and simple. *TT*

Stephe Feldman *has a B.A. in semiotics from Brown University and an M.S. in library science from Simmons College with an M.S. in library science. She writes: "It took more than twenty years for me to recognize my androgyne nature, and much of the reason for that is the dearth of information on the subject. To fill the void, in April 2001 I created a website, Androgyne Online, at http://androgyne.0catch.com, so others might come to understand themselves without having to go through months of soul-searching and anguish like I did. Most of the conclusions I reached are the result of exchanges with subscribers to the androgynes@yahoogroups.com internet mailing list."*

For those with a nagging need to know, Steph is a male-born androgyne—Ed.

Transgender: A Psycho-Social Research Dilemma

by Brenda Viola, CSW

Psychology is the study of individuals. Sociology is the study of cultures and collective groups. Social psychology differs from other social sciences in that it is the study of how society affects the individual and how the individual affects society. Ever since I became a social scientist in 1995, and later on as a clinical social worker in 2001, I've been excited about social psychology, and especially about the prospect of conducting some form of research study in order to help my transgender community and to aid my therapist colleagues by keeping them informed of the intricacies of the transgender phenomenon.

I became the Outreach Director of Long Island Femme Expression (LIFE) in 1992, a Long Island-based transgender support group of mostly crossdressers. The group installed their hotline phone in my home, to act as a screening service for membership. The group was adamant about keeping issues of sexuality out of the group. The phone line flourished, and I was able to help many transpeople, giving them access to the group and to give resource information to therapists. I also offered an empathic informal therapy. LIFE itself offered an informal kind of monthly group therapy.

I began keeping a database of information. I supplied resources for everything from electrolysis, to Internet web sites, support groups, endocrinologists, and psychotherapists in and around the Metro NYC area and throughout Long Island—for both MTFs and FTMs. I began to be invited to speak on transgender issues more and more.

I designed a Transgender 101 workshop, I offered to speak at schools and crisis hotlines and acted as an in-service educational tool for mental health agencies. Over the past twelve years, I've given this TG101 workshop to more than 75 schools, mental health professionals, and groups.

In 1999, the LIFE group suffered a schism over power and money and, almost overnight, shrank to just a few members. In order to cut expenses, LIFE decided it could no longer afford to keep the phone line open. I was upset at this turn, as I had given the number to hundreds of people who attended my Transgender 101 education workshops across Long Island. I had spoken to scores of therapists and other mental health professionals throughout the nineties and into the new millennium. I could not bring myself to close down the phone. Too many crisis hotlines and groups kept the hotline number on file.

My spouse and I decided that if I did not make too many outgoing long distance calls, we could afford to pay for the phone line on our own. We did, and I founded Long Island Transgender Resource Center and continued to offer support group information.

Over these years I returned to school as a graduate student, with the goal of promoting transgender rights. I was armed with the knowledge I had gained from the many therapists with whom I had spoken to. I had come to realize that transgendered people on Long Island needed professional representation as well as simple trans education.

When I first began answering the LIFE phone I gathered that most callers were crossdressers who had kept their proclivities a life-long secret, until they reached a time when they no longer could ignore their true feelings. By tracking the ages of my callers, I found almost all were in their thirties or beyond before they began to realize that their secret, feminine side was not going to disappear as they aged.

While in graduate school, I learned that keeping life-long, deeply repressed secrets, essentially leading a clandestine, dual life, would create a deeply-imbedded anxiety, or, at least, a mentally depressive situation. I learned that that anxiety, so far as crossdressers go, is the fear of disclosure.

It was in graduate school that I did my first formal piece of social psychology research. When I began distributing a simple survey, the only respondents available to me were LIFE members— that is, mostly crossdressers, with a few transsexuals mixed in here and there. I learned quite a bit from this first informal piece of research: for instance, the mean age of self-recognition of difference of social variance was eleven years, well before puberty.

The main issue I sought to correlate was the experience of being transgendered with a life-long anxiety over this very personal issue. I knew this both from my own life experience and through the stories of the many callers I spoke to on the hotline.

There are two problems with empirical research in the transgender community. The first problem is due to the closeted nature of our constituents and their perceived powerlessness to out themselves to family, friends, employers, and co-workers—and, in some, cases, even to themselves. This makes them reluctant to participate in any form of research study.

The second problem presents itself in the form of researcher bias, or the fact that when a researcher studies their own community with their surveys or questionnaires, they ask questions that can only be answered by community members. Researcher bias can taint the research by gently guiding respondents toward the answers the researcher wants to hear.

An other significant part of researcher bias deals with the convenience style of the research itself. The convenience style survey means that the researcher must be at or near a large segment of their research base of respondents. To ensure the validity of the research, the researcher must have a means of gaining access to a cross-section, via random selection (the strongest type of research), of the transgender community. To secure research reliability, the largest possible number of respondents must be available for testing. Reliability means that the research is testing the correct population needed for reliable results. Researcher bias also can affect the kind of testing answers being asked, since the researcher often has some connection or knowledge and understanding of the research population.

To avoid researcher bias, I had to be particularly careful because of my own life experience. I, too, had experienced

the deep anxiety and had lived a repressed, masked, life. That changed in 1992, when I went to and became a part of Fantasia Fair, a week-long celebration of gender diversity held every October on Cape Cod in the town of Provincetown, Massachusetts. Fantasia Fair combines self-help workshops with social activities. I became embroiled in the group dynamic of The Fair. It was after that first Fair that I began to come out of the closet to friends and family and experience that wonderful relief associated with coming out.

My problem was that since I had endured the same miseries as my respondents, I wrote my survey knowing the probable answers of the respondents. I had trusted that my reputation as an honest and sincere individual would be enough to overcome my own bias. It was not!

With my bias issues resolved, or so I thought, I decided to conduct new research via the use of a survey to further promote understanding of the transgender phenomenon. I contacted a number of transgender support groups and brought more than one hundred copies of a simple survey with me to Fantasia Fair 2003. I thought that being the outgoing, self-assured, and respected person that I am, other transpeople, both at the Fair and on or around Long Island, would follow my lead in my quest for righteousness. My own naiveté proved me wrong. Of the more than one hundred people who attended Fantasia Fair 2003, only 19 completed the survey—despite my promises of confidentiality, protection, and security. I can only infer that most had a fear of discovery or had some anxiety weighing heavily on their shoulders.

The same low level of responses was evident in my home population on Long Island. I received such a small number of survey replies that I knew there were simply not enough respondents to enable me to state my findings with statistical confidence.

I was crushed. Here I was trying to do something for my community, envisioning many hundreds of respondents, and my efforts were thwarted by my own biases.

What did I learn from this? Well, I learned that in writing future research projects, I must direct the research towards a single collective group of transpeople, while also collaborating with an impartial researcher not connected to the transgender community in any way. I learned that my questionnaire sample must be written directly at the chosen sample of transgendered people. Hopefully, that will give me a large, randomized sample of respondents which will ensure a truly, reliable, empirical study.

I also learned that I will not stop at my attempts at researching transgendered people. My will is strong, as is my resolve to aid my community through education.

Please, when you, as a transgendered person, come across research directed at our community, have a little faith in the researcher. Understand the researcher doesn't care who you are or where you live. The researcher only wants the data you can provide. You don't have to reveal your identity.

Your editor believes Brenda has (to use a G.W. Bushism) misunderestimated the number of times transgendered people are presented with questionnaires and asked to fill them out. They seem almost interchangeable. After having done twenty or so, and never learning what the researcher has found out, most of us aren't all that eager to fill out any more.

Researcher bias is a huge problem in social science research, but it is certainly not limited to the groups being studied. Brenda is wise in recognizing and acknowledging her own biases—but "objective" non-transgendered people are hardly that. They bring their own set of biases to the table. The better researchers own their biases, but all too often, researchers' masquerades of anonymity and claims of objectivity mask their private policial, social, and scientific agendas—Ed.

***Brenda Viola**, CSW is a licensed New York State clinician. She works for a private not-for-profit counseling service in its youth and family division. She is also the founder of Long Island Transgender Resource Center. LITRC has a crisis help line that offers free resources to trans people and their families who call. Brenda has a home therapy office and routinely speaks on the transgender phenomenon at professional conferences, schools, mental health agencies, and organizations across New York's Long Island. She can be reached at Brenda Viola, CSW, 193 Little Fresh Pond Road., Southampton, NY 11968 or e-mail to Brenvee@optline.net. The resource phone number is 631-283-1333.*

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An Encounter With God

by Shirley Boughton

Through intense study, reflection, and mental health therapy during the past turbulent five years of my life, I had come to an understanding and acceptance of my reality as a male-to-female transsexual being. Academically, I had concluded that being transsexual was a special gift from Creator God that I must somehow use to serve humanity. I wrote about this in an essay published in the Spring 2002 issue of *Transgender Tapestry*. I had received a message from the Holy Spirit after my arrest and public humiliation in March 1999. This message was transmitted though a dear friend who told me that Creator God loved me and had a special mission for me following a period of intense persecution and struggle. This mission would involve "standing in the gap" for God's people. As these years of deep struggle come to a close, it seemed appropriate to put myself more directly into the hands of Creator God to discern the specific nature of this mission.

Through a fortuitous chain of events, I came into contact with Sister Luisa Derouen, a Roman Catholic sister in New Orleans, Louisiana. Sr. Luisa has an outreach ministry to the GLBT community. She calls her home and ministry "Emmaus Oasis." I contributed my story to the collection of trans stories Luisa gathered into a booklet that in September 2003 was provided to participants at a conference of Roman Catholic diocesan outreach ministers to the gay and lesbian communities from all over the United States.

I learned that Sister Luisa conducts individual retreats for transgendered persons trying to find their spiritual center in the face of hostility and rejection from most mainline Christian denominations. This seemed to offer me a real opportunity to discern the reality and nature of my call from Creator God. I scheduled a four-day individual-directed discernment retreat in January 2004 with Sr. Luisa at her home in a middle-class African-American neighborhood. The intent was to place myself before God as my femme self and open my heart to whatever might flow from God's Spirit. During this retreat, I experienced perhaps the most powerful—the most profound—encounter with God so far in life!

In preparation for this retreat, I reflected on my recent search for a church home— a faith community where I could feel safe and spiritually nurtured. Since my final rejection in 2003 by the bishop of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Pensacola-Tallahassee from active ministry as an ordained deacon, I had begun to distance myself from active involvement with our home parish. The recent homophobic and transphobic edicts spewing out of the Vatican had also served to leave a bitter taste in my mouth toward the church I had loved from my youth.

The intent was to place myself before God as my femme self and open my heart to whatever might flow from God's Spirit.

I had found a wonderfully welcoming and spiritually nourishing faith community in the Metropolitan Community Church, but this community is 75 miles from my home. I also attended (en femme) a gathering of the Unity Center faithful, closer to home. I found this community to be reasonably welcoming, but I missed the sense of the Roman Catholic liturgy that has been for me a source of spiritual inspiration. I was also struggling with how to communicate with my son. He was, understandably, suffering significant emotional angst over the obvious feminizing changes in me. All of this weighed heavily on my soul as I began the retreat.

The retreat began after dinner with a meeting in Sr. Luisa's study. She asked me what insights I hoped to gain from this time together. I told her I had already come to an intellectual acceptance of my transsexual nature. What I needed now, most critically, was to achieve wholeness and to align myself with the will of Creator God. She explained the general dynamic and flow of the days, which are taken primarily from the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola. This ancient and well-proven methodology used throughout Christendom involves periods of silence interspersed with periods of meditation using selected scripture passages and other spiritual writings to see how God speaks to the heart and mind of the retreatant.

The role of the spiritual director is to help the retreatant focus on the most important elements of what has been revealed, to serve as a reality check, and to suggest readings that might be helpful. She suggested that I begin with some quiet time, listening to spiritual music and opening myself to God as Shirley, and then transcribe what I "hear" into my journal. She told me that I should not try to spend too much time with any particular reading or activity and to allow plenty of time for rest and quiet times so God could reach me in the silence. The following material is summarized from my journal as the retreat unfolded. My emotions ebbed and flowed, and the words simply poured out.

Day 1: On the first morning, I went to daily Mass with Sr. Luisa at her largely African-American Roman Catholic parish. I felt that it was important for my own spiritual healing and growth to worship as Shirley for the first time in the Church of my youth.

I met with Sister Luisa later that afternoon and spent nearly an hour with her. At this session, we also discussed my son's difficulties in accepting the changes he sees in me. This was an emotional session for me and for her, too. We both shed tears over the relationship difficulties inherent in transgenderism.

It seems to be clear now that my journey to wholeness—my journey to find my truth—needs to include healing the deep disconnect between my feminine mind and spirit and my masculine body. For me to live my truth and witness to that truth involves my being open and visible as a transsexual woman. I relate to others and to God as a woman (at least as a transsexual woman).

Living my truth will not permit me to return to the closet of denial. I cannot be there for anyone else unless I am true to myself. My son may never be able to accept this about me, but I cannot hide the truth—my truth—from those that I love and cherish most deeply. Now that I have discovered my truth, I cannot go back to what I was before.

It is, however, still clear that I deeply desire that my partner and soulmate, Carol, remain an integral part of my life and a companion on my journey. What does wholeness for me look like? What prevents me from achieving wholeness? What concrete steps must I take toward achieving my image of wholeness? At this juncture everything seems so murky.

Day 2: AIDS challenges me to make my life exactly the way I want it to be—exactly the way I need it to be. Today, I will sit quietly and ask my secret dreams and desires to come to me. I will image a picture of my true self. I will take steps toward making my life the way that I want it to be.

In the late afternoon, I met again with Sister Luisa to relate where I was in process with this retreat. This is really the first time that I allowed myself to be "Shirley" in a serious conversation with God, to place myself as Shirley in the traditional Roman Catholic assembly and to be instructed by Jesus through the Gospel of John as Shirley. It is clear that I am being called out to be a witness for the Spirit of Truth as my true self. I have tried desperately to crush—to hide—to bury this truth deep in the closet.

We discussed my dependence on Carol, and Sister Luisa cautioned me not to place a burden of guilt on her. Sharing with her that I feel God is calling me to transition and that I cannot transition without her at my side could send the unintended message that God has told me what she should do. Luisa suggested three more scripture passages to spend time with during the remainder of this day and before we would meet again on the next day.

I hold back from becoming my true self because I don't have the courage to face my fear of losing Carol. I allow this fear to paralyze me into inaction. This fear blocks me from embracing my truth with complete integrity. The road ahead is rough and uncertain. I do not know the way. I am not familiar with the path. The pain of being in a middle place is too much for me to bear alone. The fear of transitioning—the fear of the loss and loneliness I risk—is weighed against a future I cannot see. My courage, my faith, is not yet strong enough. This is how the second full day of my retreat ended, as I drifted off into troubled sleep.

Day 3: Every part of my body aches with tiredness. I feel weighed down by my emotions. The rain today contributes to the heaviness that is upon my soul as I search for answers.

It is clear to me now that Carol serves as an angel sent by God to help find me and bring me back from self-destructive paths. Perhaps in a different way I was also an angel for her. Has our purpose for each other reached an end? I hope not. I pray not. I want only wholeness for her, even as I seek wholeness for myself.

I reflected on other angels that have entered into my life...

I reflected on other angels that have entered into my life, bringing messages at critical moments in my life, telling me God loves me and that I have a divine purpose. Others have helped me gain a deep appreciation for my Celtic roots, and that has shaped my spirituality and worldview. I give and receive love best when I surrender to true Celtic spirituality, which helps me to understand the connectedness of all things in Your universe.

Great thinkers have helped me to understand the human core of spirituality... that God designed us to seek oneness with all creation! This desire—this human need—is hard wired into each of us and complements my Celtic DNA and transsexual wiring. Sr. Luisa serves as the most recent angel for me, helping me to open to God and to my truth.

The healing process for me involves pulling all of these things together. It must make sense to me, and it begins to. God loved us into existence and has provided us with everything we need to be co-creators with God to help finish the work of creation. This divine project requires that we all give freely of our unique gifts to the common cause. No one can be excluded, or the work cannot be completed.

It is now clear that my truth (my part of this project of love) requires that I surrender to my true identity as a transsexual woman and as one who has been blessed with deep Celtic sensibilities and perspectives. The living out of my life has often been in opposition to these fundamental aspects of my truth, but I also need to be mindful that these truths are unique to me and shape how I must serve the universal oneness. I need to appreciate and bless others who bring other gifts and perspectives in the light of their own uniqueness.

I dream great dreams that somehow I can be even a small part of the healing of our society from the evils inherent in exclusion, racism, sexism, transphobia, homophobia, and exploitation of people and the ecosystem that sustains us.

What should I retain from my many years of hiding my true self? My mental health therapists have been trying to tell me this, too. The e-mail from my son also underscores a need to do this—a need not to throw the baby out with the bath water. My son's letter also questions my new "lifestyle." What is this lifestyle? What is our "agenda" as GLBT people?

What we want is to be respected as fully human and to have access to the advantages enjoyed by the heterosexist majority. We seek life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, wrapped in our own individual truths and in harmony with God. This should be consistent with God's love for all humankind. We do oppose a family value system that oppresses women and children. We do oppose a patriarchy and hierarchy in business, government, and organized religions that exploits the Earth, oppresses and excludes, and that seeks power and control over people and resources rather than to serve humanity. We want to be free to live out our truth in peace and to be included at the banquet table of life.

I met again with Sister Luisa and shared with her the messages I felt I had heard from God deep in my heart. She reflects back to me that God has indeed blessed me as Shirley—as a transsexual woman. Now she asks, what are the practical implications of these powerful revelations when I return home? How do I live out my revealed truth? How do I

share what I have learned with Carol in a way that does not overwhelm her, yet still maintains my own integrity and truth?

I don't think God asks me to jump into this with both feet yet—and by doing so, potentially damage my relationship with Carol. As Luisa points out in the complete version of the serenity prayer by Reinhold Niebuhr, we seek only to be reasonably happy in this life. I hope I can live the essence of my truth in integrity, but yet hold back enough to keep Carol in my life. I must approach all things in gentleness and love.

Sister Luisa suggests, and I agree, that during the time left for me on this retreat, I need to concentrate on the key insights and messages that were revealed to me. What is it that I need to take with me as I leave the safety of this sacred space and return to the world?

After review and reflection, these are the key messages that God revealed to me during the retreat:

I am held in God's deep and abiding love as a transsexual woman.

I give and receive love best as a transsexual woman.

I give and receive love best with an ancient Celtic sensibility and perspective.

I am a dreamer of great dreams.

I must live my truth visibly as a transsexual woman of faith.

Carol serves in a very real way as an angel sent by God to save me from self-destruction, bring me back to the truth of who I am, and bring me back to God. There have been other such angels in my life, but she has truly been my guardian angel.

I cannot live my truth alone. I need to stay connected with God. I also need the love and support of a faith community that will honor my truth. I may not find it.

I must find ways to channel my anger and rage for Church leaders, political leaders, and the criminal justice system. I must be able to approach my persecutors and oppressors in a spirit of love and forgiveness, while still insisting on the truth.

I need to be gentle and loving with those who love me and with those who hate me for what I am, who I am, and who I am becoming.

I need to witness to and for my GLBT tribe and all liminal people.

I must remain aware that there are good and supportive individuals within the Church.

I have many good fruitful traits and attributes I need to retain through transition. These, too, are part of my truth—part of who I was, who I am becoming, and who I will become.

I can't retreat into denial, but I can be prudent in the actions I take to become whole.

The organizational Church is not a safe or welcoming place for me, but I am compelled to witness my truth within it. Our exclusion does violence to the people of God.

We are all one in and through our loving God. We are all co-creators with God to help finish the work of creation. No one can be excluded!

I need to live and love and have my being in the moment and let life unfold for me, as it will.

Day 4: During our final session together, Sr. Luisa recommended that I look to how Saint Catherine of Siena brought her perspective of the truth to help heal the Church in her time. Luisa had come to the following points in her own prayer, reading, and love for Catherine.

- Be clear when I prophesy that my witness comes from a place of love.
- Recognize that I do not know my adversary's heart.
- Taste my own sinfulness. I, too, need to be held accountable
- Pray that I receive admonishment in the same spirit that I want others to receive it from me.

My retreat ended with attendance at the Sunday liturgy with the local Catholic community. I participated fully in the Mass en femme. I was asked to introduce myself at the beginning of the liturgical celebration, and I stood and proclaimed my truth to the assembly: "I am Shirley Boughton, a Celtic transsexual woman of faith from Florida, here on retreat with Sister Luisa." The response from the parishioners in attendance seemed to be overwhelmingly accepting. Many hugged me after Mass and thanked me for my openness and honesty.

It's unrealistic to think everyone there accepted me, but my immediate experience was powerfully affirming. I also found that my depression—the deep sense of sadness, loss, and profound disconnection that had weighed on my soul for so many years—had dissipated. An inner confidence and recognition of my true place in the world had replaced this depressio— although I still felt some anxiety concerning the practical implications of the journey ahead.

Postscript: The greatest difficulty I had upon returning home was to try to relate in concrete terms all that had transpired. I had to translate an extremely powerful and emotional experience of God into a course of action that made sense in light of the real world.

Carol was convinced, at first, that I was now totally and certifiably insane! I don't blame her. It is our role as liminal people to be out in front and to go where many fear to go. I see the real need for people like me to have a good spiritual director, who can keep us grounded in reality.

As I pondered this deep need for me, it became clear that Carol serves me in just this way. She helps me come down to Earth and live in the moment, and she does this very well. My mental health therapists also help me in much the same way.

Carol and I have worked out an accommodation that will allow me ample opportunities to witness as Shirley, as a transsexual woman, in appropriate venues. In other areas I have agreed to move slowly. I have discovered that I am not meant to crusade or shock. My role is that of a bridge builder and peacemaker, to educate and draw diverse people together in a common cause. I am at peace with this.

Shirley Boughton *is President of the Emerald Coast Chapter of the Panhandle Transgender Alliance, Secretary/Treasurer of Heartsong Gulf Coast, and a certified instructor for The Aids Survival Kit. Ms. Boughton can be reached at Shirley_Boughton@cox.net.*

On the Science of Bonerism and the Identity Politics of "Single Heterosexual Men"

by Elizabeth

Consider the following:

Based on the frequency of their appearances on UPN, African-Americans might appear to constitute a sizeable minority. They do not. Most of us do not personally know an African-American, although many of us have had the experience of wondering if the person hired to replace our laid-off friend will be black to fill a quota, and most of us who have done even one night in county have seen one. There are also African-Americans who work as sharecroppers, janitors, pimps, and shoeshine boys, as well as in many other occupations, or just hang on the corner with their baby's mama. PS: I am politically incorrect and very sympathetic to African-Americans. (1)

The above paragraph is an example of what is commonly referred to as "racism." Substitute transsexuals for African-Americans, however, and you have what some purport to be "science." Willow Arune's article on this subject (*Tapestry* #106) was such a titanic eruption of distortion, personal attacks, and outright rambling blather that in a sense one feels actually thankful that it is getting circulation. One is tempted to simply add the coda "And this is why everyone thinks Bailey, Blanchard, and Lawrence and their supporters are nuts." Mindful of the truism that a lie repeated often enough and unchallenged may become accepted as the truth, however, I thought to answer Ms. Arune in turn.

The Language

There is no inherent reason why the terms transsexual woman or female transsexual could not be applied to male-to-female transsexuals in the scientific literature, and vice versa for female-to-males. That male-to-female transsexuals start out with male bodies is certainly true, but also irrelevant. Identifying transsexuals by birth sex instead of target sex contributes nothing of objective value as a scientific designation. True, there would no doubt be confusion at first if the literature began referring to transsexuals in an inoffensive manner, but science changes all the time. This would not only show respect for one's study population, it would have the added advantage of not contravening APA publishing guidelines:

Respect people's preferences; call people what they prefer to be called. Accept that preferences will change with time and that individuals within groups often disagree about the designations they prefer. Make an effort to determine what is appropriate for your situation; you may need to ask your participants which designations they prefer, particularly when preferred designations are being debated within groups. (2)

If it really were as simple as male body=male designation, then there would be no transsexuals and we would not be having this discussion. Transsexual people have already put up with enough in life without the clinicians adding more for no reason other than what is basically a social agreement. No other study population is required to put up with this type of thing. The scientific literature does not refer to gay people who used to be married before coming out as "heterosexual homosexuals."

One may argue that Blanchard didn't begin this practice and was really only doing what everyone else was. Fine, but it should stop. Bailey, meanwhile, takes this one step further, going so far as to explicitly impose his own created identity on an arbitrarily chosen portion of us: "homosexual transsexuals are a type of gay man." (3) He bases this on nothing more than the fact that it is currently difficult to tell children who are transsexual from children who are homosexual, and that young transsexuals often frequent some of the same social venues as homosexuals, where they often pick up some of the same sexual attitudes. But then, Bailey also calls himself a "single, heterosexual male" (4) even though he believes that "a type of gay man" (5) is "more attractive than the average genetic female" (6). This may be an example of what Ms. Arune referred to as post-modernist thinking.

The Science

Blanchard's model purports that all male-to-female transsexuals can be divided into two distinct groups: homosexual and autogynephilic. In the approximately fifteen years since Blanchard proposed this concept, how many valid, reliable studies are there supporting it? None. That doubtless seems an extraordinary statement given how much noise has been made about Blanchard's typology in the last couple of years, so let's break it down.

Am I claiming there is no evidence for the existence of arousal to feminization? No. There are anecdotes compiled on Anne Lawrence's website and the testimonies of some few others who have come forward in the last year to claim that the concept applies to them (although when pressed for specifics, what they talk about usually bears little resemblance to Blanchard's actual concept). But Blanchard did lots of studies! Bailey listed the abstracts of 20 studies Blanchard did, all proving his typology!

Well, no. Six of the 20 studies Bailey lists were not about transsexualism, three preselected people Blanchard considered to be "autogynephiles," four compared transsexuals of different sexual orientations on family structure and physical size, one studied autogynephilia but not typology, four studied typology but not autogynephilia, and one summarized other studies. The remaining one referred to, *The concept of autogynephilia and the typology of male gender dysphoria* (7), is, as Wyndzen notes, "the first and only empirical test of the key component of his theory: transsexuals with different sexual orientations have fantasies of being their target sex to different extents." (8) The problem is, there's no way to know how many of the people Blanchard studied were actually transsexual and his measurement instrument did not in fact measure autogynephilia. For the purposes of this study (and his other transsexual typology studies), Blanchard defined transsexuals as "patients complaining of

gender dysphoria or transvestism, who reveal cross-dressing or cross-gender wishes in the course of clinical assessment, or who exhibit an erotic preference for males of any age regardless of presenting complaint" who claimed that "at all times for at least one year" they had "felt like a woman." (9)

There are two rather large problems with this definition. First, many male-to-female transsexuals do not claim they feel like a woman. To make such a claim, one must first establish that there is in fact a clearly delineated way that "a woman" feels, and then that one feels this way. If asked whether or not I felt like a woman, I would likely respond, "I don't know, what does a woman feel like?" and base my answer on what further information was provided. I might also like to know which "woman" we're talking about. Janet Reno? Britney Spears? Leah Delaria? How do I know what any of them feel like? I feel like me. Second, and far more problematic, is that crossdressers claim to feel like women all the time, especially the particularly intense kind of crossdressers one would expect to encounter at, say, a gender clinic. We know that none of the people studied had undergone SRS, because they were still at the clinic. We do not know how many even desired to transition or considered themselves to be transsexual. Furthermore, if it is true that fetishistic transvestites are almost never homosexual, then crossdressers in the sample would have distorted the response set for the "nonhomosexual" groups far more than for the "homosexual" group. (I should note that I am not here attempting to defend Blanchard's views on crossdressers. A basic rule of social science research, which Blanchard seems to have felt free to ignore, is that you can't draw conclusions to an entire population from a small, self-selected sample. Crossdressers who do not have fetish problems would have no reason to seek services from someone like Blanchard.)

It is true that there is no professional consensus on the precise way to define who is and isn't transsexual. Ms. Arune claims, "It may be said that a transsexual is one who demands SRS and is happy after SRS, for in truth, no other definitive diagnosis exists." (10) The desire for and/or satisfaction with SRS was not a feature of Blanchard's selection methods. In essence, Blanchard created his own arbitrary definition for his study. As his definition was arbitrary, his data would then be arbitrary as well.

Blanchard's subjects were then measured on his "Core Autogynephilia Scale." The full text of the scale is available online. (11) Autogynephilia as defined by Blanchard is "a man's paraphilic tendency to be sexually aroused by the thought or image of himself as a woman." (12) Of the eight questions listed on Blanchard's Core Autogynephilia Scale, seven do not actually ask what one is aroused by, but only if one has ever been aroused while doing a particular thing. That one is aroused while doing something does not necessarily mean that one is aroused by doing that thing. Most of the human race has been aroused while in bed, but that does not mean most of humanity has a bed fetish, just that people tend to have sex in bed. I'm not claiming that transsexual women do not have sexual fantasies involving their own bodies; such a claim would be ridiculous, just that this does not necessarily make such fantasies "autogynephilic."

I dim the lights and put on my most revealing dress and highest heels, no underwear... my cunt is dripping... a hot hand has entered my dress and is cupping my tit, squeezing my nipple. Another hand is on my thigh, and there is an unmistakable bulge pressing on my ass... Sometimes this fantasy ends when the man manually brings me off. He kisses my neck and walks away, and I'm never sure who did it. (13)

The excerpts from this particular sexual fantasy, for example, hit at least five indicators on Blanchard's Core Autogynephilia Scale (aroused while picturing body, vagina, breast, leg, buttocks), putting it in the average of autogynephile territory. So, did this come off some "transgender erotica" website? Or perhaps it's an excerpt from the dream diary of Anne Lawrence? No, it's actually from *Women on Top*, a collection of the sexual fantasies of genetic females compiled by sexologist Nancy Friday. *Women on Top* is the perfect antidote to all this ridiculous "male sex drive" business. Some of the stuff in that book even puts *The Man Who Would Be Queen's* infamous "robot man" to shame:

As I am finally pulled into the machine, a mechanical hand reaches into my vagina, and a green light above the hand goes off, meaning I have passed the test of having a satisfactory vagina. The second arm manipulates my clitoris, and again the green light goes off. A third arm (all the while I'm being pulled into the machine by the belt) comes out and inserts a cold yellow rod up my anus, and the green light goes off...(14)

It's rather telling that Blanchard has never compared transsexual women with genetic female controls, and Bailey "admits he's 'increasingly aware' that he doesn't comprehend female sexuality." (15) If they don't understand it, if they never compare the two groups (or if the transsexual sample is all drawn from drag bars while the control group is not; this is what we call "sample bias"), how can they be so sure transsexual women can't possess a sexuality that approximates that of genetic females? Ms. Arune appears to claim in her piece that this really is what they're saying, it's just that, "What is natural in one is unnatural in the other." (16) Ms. Arune appears to have misunderstood Blanchard completely. Blanchard specifically terms "autogynephilia" to be a paraphilia. Unless Ms. Arune believes female sexuality is inherently fetishistic (and I don't think even Blanchard or Bailey have gotten that far... yet...), those two assertions are irreconcilable. Just to make sure, however, let's see what Blanchard has to say:

I do not think that genuine autogynephilia occurs in genetic women. Genetic women might "feel sexy" when preparing their toilet, especially if they are making a major production of it, but I do not think the simple thought of having a vagina, for example, is arousing to them in and of itself. (17)

Apparently, Blanchard's never met "mechanical hands green lit my vagina" girl. Of course, you don't need to find the simple thought of having a vagina arousing in and of itself to be declared an autogynephile according to Blanchard's Scale. If what Blanchard defines as autogynephilia is common among genetic women, that would directly contradict Blanchard's claims about transsexual typology. How one's body responds to one's lover is a critical component of female sexuality. If transsexual women happen to respond in the same way, doesn't that sort of, like, contradict every single claim, assumption, and conclusion Blanchard and Co. have ever made about transsexualism?

I often stand naked before the mirror and play with my nipples as though I were being photographed several times for a Penthouse spread. I bend forward and hold my pussy lips open from behind so that I can see the silhouette of my lips in the mirror. I usually bring myself right off there and observe closely my face as my body quivers with orgasm. (18)

Okay, that one did actually come from a transwoman. No it didn't, it's another genetic female. Funny, it's the sort of thing you'd think a "sexologist" would know about.

Blanchard's studies also claim transwomen not exclusively attracted to men show less female-stereotypical gender role performance in childhood, as a group, than those exclusively attracted to men. I have no doubt that, taken as groups, this is accurate. However, the same claim is true for genetic females. Since this is a difference one would expect to find whether or not a woman is transsexual, and hence whether or not transsexualism is caused by two distinct types of misdirected male sex drives, it cannot be considered evidence of Blanchard's typology. This indicates typology only if you assume *a priori* that transsexualism is exclusively a product of sexual orientation, and you can't assume your theory to prove your theory, that's cheating.

A further claim given as supporting Blanchard's typology is that transwomen exclusively attracted to men transition, as a group, earlier in life than those not exclusively attracted to men. This, too, is a phenomenon one would expect regardless of whether or not Blanchard's typology is accurate. There is a long-standing societal bias towards the idea that transwomen are only attracted to men, which those not exclusively attracted to men must get past before they can label themselves transsexual and seek transition services. Additionally, those living in the gay subculture have social outlets more open to feminine expression in those perceived as male, thus allowing them safe spaces to express and come to terms with their feelings earlier than those who do not have such outlets. Again, positing that different experiences of people with different sexual orientations is evidence of differing "types" of transsexualism works only if one assumes *a priori* that transsexualism is exclusively a product of sexual orientation, which is still cheating.

But of course, transsexuals who deny autogynephilia will still show evidence of it in the lab. Blanchard proved that too! Well, no, he didn't. The study cited as proof of this, Blanchard's *Phallometric Detection of Fetishistic Arousal in Heterosexual Male Cross-Dressers,* (19) which again lumped crossdressers with transsexuals (the same person can be a transsexual or a crossdresser in Blanchard's studies, as it suits his need), showed that the less Blanchard's study subjects claimed to be aroused by crossdressing, the less arousal they showed to crossdressing narratives when tested with penile plethysmography. However, every group, including the one that denied all arousal to crossdressing, showed at least some arousal to narratives involving dressing in female clothing. Let's assume that at least some in the group that denied all arousal to the idea of dressing in female clothing were transsexual. (I should note that I am fairly agnostic on the relationship between transsexualism and transvestism, I simply point out that Blanchard's claim that they are two variants of the same underlying condition is based on studies which themselves conflated the two groups) Does that prove Blanchard's claims?

I like to look at myself wearing lots of makeup and tight clothes. Knowing that I look sexy makes me feel good. It doesn't matter whether men or women look at me. (20)

I am in a mansion, dressed in a ball gown with wide skirts and a tight bodice. The swell of my bosom is evident due to the corset. (21)

I dim the lights and put on my most revealing dress and highest heels, no underwear. (22)

I put on my new thong bikini (hot pink/black). (23)

I put on a sexy, snug negligee top with pretty panties- the top shows off my large, firm tits. (24)

These are not excerpts of fantasies reported by transwomen. These are all from sexual fantasies of, yes, genuinely XX chromosomed, natally female, honest-to-god biological women. Lots of women like dressing sexy. Deal with it. The fact that some transsexual women also feel this way would again seem to prove Blanchard's critics' point.

An oddity in Ms. Arune's article is that while she raises the issue of lying to conform to gatekeepers' models, she seems to completely miss the implications in regard to Blanchard's claims. Which clinic has absolutely the most notorious reputation for making it necessary to lie in order to access transition services? Come on, you all know, say it with me: the Clarke, of course. It's very strange that a clinician who, according to Ms. Arune, made it possible for transsexual women to be honest with him would acquire such a reputation. Blanchard and his supporters would claim transsexual women lie in order to avoid his typology, which makes absolutely no sense. One goes to a gender clinic in order to access transition services. One accesses transition services by convincing the gatekeeper one fits the gatekeeper's ideas about what a transsexual person is. The only reason to lie to Blanchard would be the same reason every transwomen has ever lied to a gatekeeper: to fit the model. When faced with one arbitrary definition of what a transsexual woman is, one conforms one's story to the definition. Blanchard's great advance is simply to have two arbitrary definitions instead of one. Thus, his clients figure out which definition they are expected to conform to, based on the arbitrary choice of the clinician, and conform themselves to it. Many, of course, may initially arrive at Blanchard's clinic not realizing the role they are expected to play and consequently attempt to tell the truth. Since this often doesn't conform to whatever "type" the clinician has in mind, they are assumed to be lying, which the model says to expect. If you say what they want to hear, you prove their ideas to be true. If you don't say what they want to hear, you prove their ideas to be true.

(Brian): I'm not the messiah! I'm not the messiah!

(Woman): Only the true messiah denies his divinity!

(Brian): Well what kind of chance does that give me?! All right then, I AM the messiah!

(Crowd): HE IS THE MESSIAH! (25)

In movies, this is known as "comedy." Its purpose is to evoke laughter at the inherent absurdity of the situation. At the offices of the CAMH gender clinic and Northwestern's psychology department, it is apparently known as "science." Why

aren't there lots of teenaged hot MTF transitioners attracted to women and older not-so-hot MTF transitioners attracted to men? Well, in the real world, there are. At CAMH and likeminded clinics, they know it's better to conform to the clinicians' expectations. This has been talked about for years; it's not like it's some huge secret.

Two arbitrary definitions instead of one may have seemed like an advance twenty years ago, but this is not twenty years ago. Ms. Arune's claim that Blanchard's model is the only alternative to an even more restrictive one is simply untrue. Ms. Arune claims to side with experts, and for the moment, so will I. I, however, will side with the majority of experts who reject Blanchard's model. I will, on this particular issue, side with HBIGDA, which has on more than one occasion spoken out against this nonsense. In the U.S., we have moved beyond the era of restrictive clinics demanding compliance to an arbitrary set of symptoms. The university clinics still exist, but hardly anyone who's actually serious about transition goes anywhere near one. You can get doctor-monitored hormone therapy with far less bother and time than jumping through CAMH's hoops, and in increasing cases without even strict adherence to the minimum standards of the SOC. This has not resulted in a sudden increase in the number of those transitioning who later regret it. Paradoxically, this is in large degree because transition services are not covered the way they are in Canada, Australia, and Britain. There, you can get treatment covered, but only if you submit to one particular clinic. You have clinics operating monopoly control over government-subsidized treatment on a socially despised client population, which the mental health establishment has decreed have no inherent right to treatment. That is a near-perfect recipe for abuse. I would of course never dream of conjecturing that the inherent conflict of interest created by Blanchard simultaneously holding the position of researcher and of gatekeeper to treatment could have had the slightest biasing effect on his "science." Similarly, I see nothing at all tautological in requiring MTF transsexual clients to wear only skirts or dresses to clinic sessions and then writing "scientific" papers on the ways in which MTF transsexual people show stereotypical gender role performance. I'm certain Blanchard had entirely valid reasons for demanding control over what his clients could change their names to; after all, calling yourself Terri or Chris would be… just bad, very, very bad. The fact that Blanchard's clinic's main business is working with sex offenders and that they use theoretical and treatment models for transsexualism that look remarkably like those used with sex offenders can only be the strangest of coincidences. And of course everyone knows Blanchard and his clinicians are right to assert that there's essentially no such thing as gay FTMs. (26) After all, if it doesn't fit their models, it can't exist. Der transfagen est verboten! NEIN!

The Four Greatest Helpers

No, Ms. Arune was not referring to Benjamin, Biber, Gooren, and Ousterhout. Yes, she really did say Blanchard, Petersen, Bailey, and Lawrence have done more to help transwomen than any other four people in the world. I know. Apparently, Ms. Arune inhabits a parallel universe where "help" is synonymous with, respectively, inhibiting proper access to medical care, testifying against including transsexuals in human rights legislation, misleading and sexually objectifying your research subjects (Look, on this page we get Bailey horny! And on this page, we get him horny again! Ooh, look, here we are getting one of his students horny!) and obsessively projecting one's own behavior onto others.

I somehow doubt it's an accident that the four people mentioned are all either known (Blanchard and Petersen) or alleged (Bailey and Lawrence) to have sexually abused transsexual women (Andrea's was not the first allegation of its type, nor the only one similar to the well-documented incident that ended Lawrence's career as an anesthesiologist). Arguments over the fact that the "penile plethysmograph" is not generally accepted as a valid measurement instrument tend to obscure what I consider to be the real issue. Blanchard and Petersen took people who often have serious body image issues, often involving their genitalia, strapped a machine to their genitals, and forced them to watch and listen to weird fetish porn. They strapped… a machine… to their genitals… and forced them… to watch fetish porn. They may consider it science; I consider it a form of sexual abuse. Blanchard and Petersen never should have been allowed to resign from HBIGDA. They and the rest of the Clarke crew should have been kicked out a long time ago for grossly unethical "treatment" methods.

The Name Calling

I must admit Ms. Arune has a point here. True, she undermines her argument by insisting that BBL never refer to us as men when they've done so like 1000 times (yes, even post-op, try reading them once in a while) but if they were wrong to do it, then what was everyone else's excuse? We can split hairs about whether or not people who considering themselves a particularly effeminate type of gay man or a man literally in love with their own feminine image could ever "really" be female, but if nothing else, it's just frigging rude and immature. The speed with which "autogynephile" has become the trans equivalent of n——r is something the entire "community" should be absolutely ashamed of. If we use the tools of the oppressor to attack each other, all we end up doing is adding currency to them, and then we have only ourselves to blame when they come back to bite us all right in the ass. Besides, some things you just don't screw with, and someone else's identity is one of them. That Bailey did it first doesn't make it right to do to others.

Trannies Behaving Badly

USENET is a pretty f——d up place. In theory, it was supposed to be the ultimate democratic information exchange. Anyone could come talk to anyone else about anything. In practice, it's where idiots go to yell at each other. One particularly exemplary instance of this phenomenon is a particular newsgroup known as "alt.support.srs." This was, I am informed, at one time a place where useful information could actually be obtained about SRS and transition procedures. For the last several years, however, it has been taken over by a group of approximately half a dozen or so people, give or take from year to year, whose main preoccupation in life appears to be hurling the same insults at each other over and over and over again. I mention this because this particular forum appears to be the source of the bulk of Ms. Arune's claims about the behavior of

"we transsexuals." Anyone with the stomach to dredge through enough of this sewer will recognize more than one of the behaviors "we" supposedly engage in as coming from one particular fool with whom Ms. Arune, herself a prominent contributor to this newsgroup's never-ending flame wars, has carefully cultivated a longstanding and rather absurd rivalry. Alt.support.srs is not screwed up because it's a transsexual forum, however, it's screwed up because it's a USENET forum. If you go to the places where absurd and nasty behavior is likely to be found, you will find absurd and nasty behavior. This will particularly be the case if you go to these sorts of places looking to intentionally provoke nasty behavior:

Jennifer, honey,

I came here to get a quotable quote. You provided that in minutes and so I need not remain. You see, I needed a true example of absolute and total TS garbage. Your posts gave me some wonderful examples.

Never mind, dear, you can see yourself in print shortly. I shall attribute your words merely to this newsgroup (I don't think you would like to read your own words attributed to you)...

Willow (27)

So yes, there is truth in Ms. Arune's claim that a transsexual may talk in "a pseudo-typical female refinement, prefacing any insult with Honey or Dear." (28) (The original version of Ms. Arune's essay included the sentence "At times this can be rather funny to an observer of meetings." (29)) One can indeed find examples of such behavior:

*No honey - you *used* to bother me a great deal...* (30)

Care to name another, dear Jenny. (31)

Welcome to the real world, honey. You go play "let's pretend" on the weekend. (32)

Keep on going honey— It passes the time. (33)

There are literally hundreds of other examples on this particular forum; the curious thing is that the poster almost always seems to identify themselves as "Willow Arune" (or as "Silence Dogood," who happens to list the same email address). If Ms. Arune finds such behavior as ridiculous as I do, I would suggest a ready-made solution would be for her to simply stop engaging in it. Regardless, the fact that she is transsexual and she engages in this behavior does not therefore mean all transsexuals do.

Space doesn't allow me the opportunity to refute every single false or misleading allegation Ms. Arune makes to specific people in the transsexual community, but for the sake of accuracy I will attempt to correct a few of the more egregious:

Andrea James did indeed ask Ms. Arune if there was any truth to the allegation that she is a registered sex offender. Whether she likes it or not, Ms. Arune and other "autogynephilia supporters" have made themselves an issue by claiming to be typical of transsexual women, but simply more honest. If there is an unusually high level of predatory sexual behavior among "autogynephilia supporters," that would be relevant to the debate as to how typical they in fact are. As said allegation has been neither confirmed nor refuted with documentation, Andrea has not published it.

Lynn Conway did not speak out in *The Washington Times* against further research on transsexualism; she spoke out against the specific research Bailey did as unethical. Read the article. (34)

Dr. McCloskey's warning to sue Bailey if he defames her again as an autogynephile while not suing Ms. Arune for doing the same may relate to the fact that a university professor using his professional credentials to make a bogus mental illness diagnosis on someone he's never met is a far cry from some random nut who just likes to insult people. It's apparently true that Dr. McCloskey did send a similar letter once to Ms. Arune after receiving repeated taunts from her. While I feel it is unfortunate that Dr. McCloskey allowed herself to be lowered to Ms. Arune's level, my personal opinion would be that this particular situation reflects more poorly on the taunter than the tauntee.

The children—she attacked the children! Well, yes, she did, but as is par for the claims of BBL supporters, the truth of the matter is a little more complicated. Early on in the controversy, Andrea James posted pictures of Bailey's son and daughter, with captions under each that, respectively, quoted from Bailey's book that such children were likely to "work as waitresses, hairdressers, receptionists, strippers, and prostitutes, as well as in many other occupations" (35) and that summarized the typology Bailey promotes as well as his claim that one can make the diagnosis with a twelve-question test. Bailey then commented that what Andrea put up constituted "dirty captions." (36) Andrea was criticized by many, both within and without the transsexual community, for bringing Bailey's children into it, and subsequently took the page down and apologized. I happen to agree with Bailey that the captions were "dirty." That is why I happen to feel that Bailey never should have written them in the first place. It is the height of hypocrisy for Bailey to claim that his language is "sympathetic" (37) to transsexual women but suddenly becomes "dirty" when applied to non-transsexual people. The fact that what Andrea did crossed the line itself proves the point she was attempting to make in her admittedly misguided way: that's just a disgusting way to talk about people. Unlike Andrea, as of this writing Bailey has yet to apologize for his "dirty" words.

Ms. Arune appears to contradict herself by first claiming that some crossdressers become transsexual, but later claiming that those who do were "merely incorrectly diagnosed." (38) I'm unable to correct this one because I don't know which claim she actually believes to be true. I would merely point out that how different people happen to cope with being transsexual is a separate issue from whether or not they have different "types" of transsexualism. This also explains the high dropout rate of "autogynephilic transsexuals" noted by Ms. Arune. Among mainstream clinicians, it is understood that crossdressers experiencing difficult periods in their lives will not uncommonly misdiagnose themselves as transsexual and seek to transition. Not surprisingly, almost all will drop out at some point along the way as they begin to realize that the reality of transition is very different from their expectations. The mainstream view would be that such people were never transsexual to begin with, but under Blanchard's model they are all lumped in as "autogynephilic transsexuals."

Me, Therefore You, Too

Well, that may describe some, perhaps you and others like you, but it most certainly does not describe me! (39)

Well, yes, that's sort of the point. And I don't think it's just me. Out of the 150+

members of Willow's "autogynephilia support" group, most are lurkers; the majority of posters are BBL critics, and many of the "supporters," such as Bailey and Blanchard themselves, do not identify with the concept. We're talking perhaps 15-20 people, as opposed to the over 1400 who signed the petition demanding Lambda retract Bailey's book as an award finalist, of whom perhaps around 100 were not themselves transgendered. By my math, the debate is running somewhere between 98-99% against BBL in the trans community. Linking individual people into groups is all well and good, but the reasons for linking them must be valid. If the "expert" proposing to make these linkages makes wildly inaccurate claims about my life, experiences, feelings, and thoughts and proposes that I trust his or her assertions rather than my own memories simply on the grounds that they are an expert and they say so, then I am inclined to doubt said "expert." I find myself more open to people who want to know who I am rather than tell me who I am.

We deny all interest in sex, we rarely even talk about sex, we cultivate images of delicate flowers—who are you talking about? Seriously, what are you on and where can I get some? That may be the way it's done on Asses R Us, but there's a whole world out there. It may be the case that someone who is sexually obsessed with a narcissistic fetish, as Ms. Arune claims to be, is simply unable to comprehend a healthy sexuality, but let me try to lay it out here: to deny having "autogynephilia" or an extreme case of queer hard-on for the straight guy does not somehow equate to denying having a sex drive. I have no problem with the statement that I had SRS partly in order to have sex, but SRS is only one part of transition, as sex is only one part of life.

There's a no-win situation with Blanchard supporters. If you take issue with the hyper-sexualized worldview, you are depicted as some sort of repressed holier-than-thou prude in denial, but if you make any mention of sexuality, it's all proof that this sexual taxonomy is valid. Typical sexist crap all women have to deal with from patriarchy. (40)

We are a highly fragmented community. We break down along lines of age, age at transition, social class, etc., thus making us… absolutely no different than anyone else. Of course those labeled by BBL as "homosexual transsexuals" are more well-connected socially than BBL's "everyone else" group—they're all drawn from the same socio-economic class and age group. Is it really an accident that everyone Bailey labels as an "autogynephile" just happens to be middle-class, while everyone he labels as a "homosexual" just happens to be lower-class? (Hence the real reason "Victoria" (41) didn't get mentioned in Bailey's book—she's too hot to be caricatured as an "autogynephile," but she's middle-class, so she couldn't be caricatured as part of the dregs of the gay ghetto.) I find I have the most in common with other middle- to upper-middle-class transwomen who transitioned in their twenties, regardless of sexual orientation, and are socially integrated as women— should we start our own "type?" If I find I have little in common with someone who's a completely different generation than me, who lived an apparently successful "male" life, including fathering children, whose main preoccupation in life is insulting people over the internet, who effects a "pseudo-typical female refinement," isn't that completely to be expected? Dear me, my goodness, merciful heavens, oh I have the vapors—who the hell talks like that besides you, Willow?

But of course, all points of view are valid. No, they aren't. Ravings about idiotic "transgender hierarchies" aside,

Crossdressers wear their fetish, and the gleam in their eyes, however muted by time or habit, the unmistakable presence of a lust being satisfied or a desire being fulfilled in that moment, in your presence, even by your presence, is unnerving. The mix of the crossdressers' own arousal and anxiety and our responsive anxiety and discomfort is more than most of us can bear. (42)

Substitute self-professed autogynephiles for crossdressers, and you have in a nutshell the problem I suspect most transwomen have with people like Ms. Arune and Anne Lawrence, especially the part about lust being satisfied "by your presence." I'll support the right of anyone to make any body modification they choose, but I wonder if the reason Ms. Arune seems to alienate so many transsexual women is due less to her high profile than her apparent need to so vigorously project her own behavior and desires onto others. *We* do not all try to talk like Victorian ladies-in-waiting, we do not run around USENET bragging about every teenaged transitioner we talk to, we do not hold misogynistic views of women as delicate flowers with no sex drive, we do not sign onto young-adult oriented Internet forums, obsessively search out every mention of our name, and send creepy e-mails to all the posters. (I should note that I am not here attempting to defend Amy Bloom's views on crossdressers(42); while I have very little experience of crossdressers, it seems to me reasonable that one crossdresser who's acting like a creepy weirdo towards you is unfortunately likely to leave more of an impression than ten or even one hundred crossdressers who are perfectly nice and normal. There are oddballs in every identifiable grouping of people. Any time a nice and normal crossdresser wants to trade tequila shots, hey, set 'em up.)

Ms. Arune has more recently proclaimed that she has been commissioned to do a regular series on "transsexual myths" for *Tapestry*, so it appears that readers can look forward to more daring exposes on the internal feuding of Asses R.Us: "I have a female brain!" "Oh yeah? Well I'm a post-op!" "Oh yeah? Well my vagina's deeper than yours!" "OH YEAH!" At least it'll keep her off the streets.

The Implications

Ms. Arune claims that the events of the last year have had the effect of driving researchers out of this field. To the extent she is referring to researchers in the mold of Blanchard, Bailey, and Lawrence, I hope that's true. If fantasies about a vast transsexual mafia hell-bent on destroying all who question them will convince such people to leave research on transsexualism to those whose heads are not inserted entirely into their own rectums, then fine: beware the hordes of uppity trannies. We have an army of robot monkeys and we know kung fu; fear us, for our day has come. Legitimate researchers will unfortunately be likely to find an increased atmosphere of mistrust, thanks to the actions of BBL. I believe that, given time, such an atmosphere can be overcome through the application of a relatively few simple principles on the part of researchers:

- Transsexual people are entitled to the

same respect as any other study population.

- Conclusions should be reached after analyzing data, not before.
- Data contradicting one's working hypothesis should be reported, not ignored or explained away.
- Who does and does not give you a boner is not a legitimate research parameter.
- A researcher's political identity as a "single, heterosexual male" (keep reaching for that brass ring, Dr. Bailey) does not somehow confer objective insight on one's study population.
- APA guidelines, including those regarding language, should be followed.
- Question beforehand how your own biases may be reflected in your sampling. For example, if you decide in advance to only look for transsexual people, or one particular "type" of transsexual people, in areas frequented by prostitutes, the transsexual people you find will tend to be prostitutes. A similar phenomenon will occur if you desire to study the sexual attitudes of typical genetic females and do all your sampling at the Moonlight Bunny Ranch in Nevada.

I have enough faith in the broader scientific community to believe that most will be able to overcome potential biases such as those which have overwhelmed BBL and Co. Potentially more troubling is what this little episode has revealed about the place of the "T" in GLBT. Lambda Literary essentially asserted the right to deny any and all accountability to a population for which they granted themselves the right to speak. Whether or not the experience has really been humbling for them is a question only time will answer. If they cannot truly bring themselves to admit what they did wrong, then they need to suspend the transgender award category for the time being. Our place in any GLBT coalition must be that of equals, or none at all. If they can truly accept this, if researchers can become more interested in who we are than in who they want us to be, then this mess will actually have produced something worthwhile. That will not be a black age. It will be the dawn.

Elizabeth *is a stealth transwoman.*
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Endnotes

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Tapestry's Editorial Miscalculation

by Christine Beatty

While I think I understand why the editors of *Tapestry* chose to disregard their own standards for submission when they printed Willow Arune's excessively long and rambling "I am Arune" article, I believe it was a dreadful miscalculation with negative repercussions to transsexual women. Not only does it hand fresh ammunition to those who continue to degrade us with their stigmatizing theories and pronouncements, but it directly insults your readership by giving the author so much room to rail against not only individuals but most of the transsexual community.

Doubtless those among *Tapestry's* readership who self-identify as autogynephiles are flooding you with positive feedback, but I believe the negative response will be much, much greater. Whatever the editors' intentions, giving such a negative article seven full pages goes far beyond "fair and ethical" and could be interpreted as advocacy. Your submission guidelines suggest sticking to one point, yet Arune was allowed to wield an editorial shotgun covering an impossibly wide range of topics. There's a word that describes this kind of long-winded, unfocussed outpouring of opinion: rant.

In the seven thousand words of space you gave to Arune, she covered: the saintliness of autogynephilia proponents Ray Blanchard and J. Michael Bailey; the validity of applying the autogynephilia diagnosis to all "non-homosexual" transsexual women; blanket allegations that transsexual women are liars, that we believe we're superior to crossdressers and that a "majority" of primary transsexuals do sexwork; assertions that transsexual women have "nothing in common" with born-women; that all transsexuals are motivated by sex; and wholesale condemnations of some of the most respected women in our community, especially Dr. Lynn Conway and Andrea James.

If *Tapestry* could have bothered to uncap its blue pen at all, I wish it would have done so with the numerous false allegations against Lynn and Andrea. For instance Arune claims that Lynn, Andrea and others of us have destroyed "research into transsexualism" because we dared impugn Blanchard's autogynephilia theory and because we protested Bailey's *The Man Who Would Be Queen* at every turn. *Tapestry* could have also excised Arune's escalation of her Internet feud into its pages, where she cites as evidence a newsgroup known for its proliferation of imposters. These are among her more harmless slurs against Lynn and Andrea.

> While I will leave it to someone else to further address autogynephilia, I must refute Arune's defense of J. Michael Bailey.

Most damning is the way Arune dismisses Lynn and Andrea's many contributions to the transsexual community, elevating the Blanchard/Bailey faction above these women who led the fight against Bailey's libelous and discredited book. Arune can't even get her facts straight, reporting that Dr. Conway lived 18 years in stealth when, in fact, Lynn did so for thirty years. Arune seems to not know that in Lynn's time providers told post-op transsexual people to blend into the woodwork, although having been fired by IBM for transitioning was reason enough for Lynn not to call attention to herself. Yet Arune takes it upon herself to judge Dr. Conway for her years of stealth.

Most of the article, however, is spent cheerleading Blanchard's autogynephila theory, defending his research methods and dismissing the concerns of transsexual women have about applying these theories to explain transsexualism. In reality, there is little clinical support for these theories beyond Blanchard's studies. Even Blanchard's most notable transsexual proponent, Anne Lawrence, admitted in her 1998 *Tapestry* article that "none of Blanchard's subjects had actually undergone gender transition and sex reassignment surgery—they were simply males who were gender dysphoric and who said they felt like they were, or wanted to be, women."

While I will leave it to someone else to further address autogynephilia, I must refute Arune's defense of J. Michael Bailey. She calls him one of the people who've "done more to help transsexuals over years of service than perhaps any other four people in the world." This statement is a stellar example of a myopia likely borne of her apparent need to justify her own autogynephilia. That she endorses a book that paints transsexual women as perverts, prostitutes, and thieves suggests that she has a low opinion of other transsexual women in general.

One also must wonder if that low opinion possibly extends even to herself. If she endorses Bailey's book, then how could she have missed where he states "autogynephilia is not primarily a disorder of gender identity" and instead labels it a "sexual preference." How could Arune have missed where he suggests AGP is a paraphilia, lumping it in with sadomasochism, exhibitionism, necrophilia, bestiality, and pedophilia? And how about where Bailey admits his own students are "especially hesitant to support surgery for nonhomosexual transsexuals, once they learn about autogynephilia." His students say: "But they don't have the wrong body, they are mentally ill." How could she support such a book unless she agrees with these damning statements?

Arune states that transsexual women have a "so-called" community and that she's "ashamed" of it. She attacks some of our most visible members who deserve to be called leaders instead of "nutty" malcontents. She defends a small group of proponents and their autogynephilia theory in the face of massive disagreement from both transsexual women and our

providers. And she submits an article that carries her online feud to a respected publication of the transgender community. None of these things surprises me.

What surprises me is that *Tapestry* printed it. Aside from upsetting the vast majority of its readership, it has handed a major victory to the autogynephilia faction who's fond of claiming that only a "handful" of transsexual woman actually oppose their theories and/or Bailey's book. I expect to soon hear their public crowing at how *Tapestry* has vindicated their theories and pronouncements.

The only consolation I can take is in knowing that mine will be among many voices that protest the printing of Arune's full diatribe. I just hope this debate and this publication's plans to continue giving a voice to Arune actually serves a useful purpose and does not prove to be a costly miscalculation. *T*

We were aware of the difficulties with Ms. Arune's piece, but felt it was important to air another view of autogynephilia and the Bailey controversy—Ed.

Christine Beatty *is an author and journalist from Las Angeles. She is currently finishing her new book and marketing her latest screenplay. She may be contacted through her website at www.glamazon.net.*

Joseph Winn MSW, LICSW

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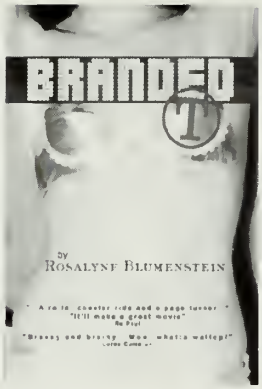
Branded T

Review by Helen Boyd



Branded T (2004) Rosalyne Blumenstein. First Books Library. ISBN 1410772411. Paperback, $19.95.

The most incredible thing about Rosalyne Blumstein's having written *Branded T* is that she is still around to write. If I had known the street kid she was in 1970s New York or the young adult who was doing more kinds of drugs than I'd heard of at that age, or even the thirty-something who was raising hell at the GLBT Center in Manhattan, my bet would have been she wouldn't have made it. AIDS, street violence, peep show perps, violent johns, and drugs, drugs, and more drugs; each and any of them could have taken this girl out of the picture, and how much poorer the trans community would have been if she never lived to grow into a dynamic, heartfelt, powerful woman. She has not only been a visible trans activist, but she's a social worker who has both academic and street smarts. What could be better than a combination of New York street bravado and the facts to back them up?

Branded T is autobiographical almost to a fault. It's full of the rhythms of New York street slang (there's a glossary in back for the uninitiated), from copping to schtupping to "the Deuce" – another term for the newly-Disneyfied 42nd Street, which was a kind of second home to Ms. Blumstein through the years when it was still our national "Street of Sin." Her story is about as tidy as the Lower East Side on a Sunday morning when the Puerto Rican mothers are dressed for church amidst the remnants of the previous night's parties; you may find yourself reading some scenes with one eye closed, hoping that it will all work out in the end. (It does.)

In some sense, Ms. Blumenstein's story is very much a New York story of back alleys and shady doctors, unexpected violence, seedy sex clubs, and whores with hearts of gold.

Branded T follows our young heroine and future activist from her birth in a male body to her discovery of David Bowie and 1970s androgyny and through her own transition as a teenager in the streets of New York. We read about her first trick (which ends in a rape too awful to describe), her various lost virginities (I lost count at about a dozen), and her first relationships. She admits to stuffing socks in her first tube top, worrying about being "spooked" (identified as trans by someone without having told them), and about rejection from male partners when they figured out she was a "Change" (short for sex change). These issues are raised primarily in the first half of the book, and make for a roller-coaster of a read.

Throughout, there are drugs and sex–more than enough for this to have been just a recovery story, without all the issues about trans identity being raised.

The second half of the book focuses more on how Ms. Blumstein conquered a young adulthood of Tuinals and, later, heroin, and how she went back to school (having dropped out of high school), got her Master's Degree, and became Director of the Gender Identity Project at the GLBT Center in Manhattan–a project that continues to do positive, progressive work for the totality of the GLBT community.

Stashed at the end of the book, like a kind of afterthought, are five appendices, the second of which contains speeches Ms. Blumenstein gave as a professional activist, her logic behind the fight she gave the GLBT Center for not being inclusive of all of the community (she calls it the GLbt, and textually shows how unimportant the issues of the Bisexual and Transgender communities are in comparison to the Gay and Lesbian community's).

I read the entire book waiting to hear her views on transgender politics, what she'd learned about what was effective and what wasn't, and about what it might take for your average transperson or partner to speak out. The second half would have benefited by them being worked into the narrative, as her searches for sex and love feel repetitive and one-dimensional, a kind of clean and sober version of the first half. I wanted to know how and when and why her life transformed from solipsism to selfless leadership, which events led to which decisions, and who she had just broken up with before she gave her first big speech. It's as if even she found her drug-using, peep show dancing days to be more interesting than the ones she spent as an out and effective community organizer, and that's a shame. It's her struggle I was interested in, not her suffering.

That said, the five appendices are full of intelligent insight into trans identity, politics, community, self-esteem, and substance abuse. Her ideas about the GLBT community and her efforts at confronting its GL-heavy bias are invaluable in this year of debate about gay marriage. She is, after all, a straight-identified woman with a transsexual history, and she is the first trans writer to make me realize that me and my husband (who identifies as transgendered), have as much a right to support and community as the drag queens, transitioning women, and FTMs growing up in the lesbian community. After reading her book I know that every time my partner and I walk into the GLBT Center and feel welcomed, we'll know to quietly thank Rosalyne Blumenstein. We as a couple wouldn't be there if it hadn't been for her work, and we as a community wouldn't have the resources that similar centers provide to trans-identified people nationwide.

All of the writing is very personal, from the heart, and in some instances nearly stream of consciousness. The impersonal style makes the book feel as if it is a personal letter to a new friend. I appreciated the warmth, but also felt it was a little bit too full of slang, which, when you're not entirely familiar with the actual lingo, can feel distancing.

Blumstein's personality, as it's reflected in the writing, creates a constant feeling of being invited in while being kept at arm's length. The only real complaint I have–and this is one that applies to many books published within the transgender community–is that the actual publication is nonstandard. Paragraphs are not indented anywhere in the book. Italics are over-used, and there are far too many exclamation points, parenthetical remarks, and misspellings. Typos and grammatical errors add to the sense of distance. Some sentences need to be reread several times for comprehension—

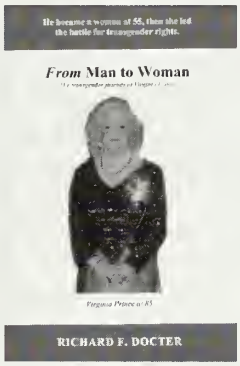
not because the subject is difficult, but because the writing itself is unclear. It's hard to tell if the writing style is intentionally amateurish (that is, if Blumenstein chose to write in such a personal way) or if the book was simply lacking a good professional editor. A better compromise between the writer's voice and professional writing could have been achieved, and one gets instead the sense that this book was rushed to publication, even though the manuscript seems to have been written a few years ago. Unfortunately, the failure to put in the hard work necessary to edit and format the book makes it difficult to read, despite the story.

Branded T is a rollercoaster of a book. There are quiet spots when you know you're in for more insanity, insane bits you're hoping you'll make it through, and once you've finished it you stand up to look at the future of our community feeling energized, a little scared, a tiny bit overwhelmed, and remarkably hopeful.

From Man to Woman

Review by Miqqi Alicia Gilbert

From Man to Woman: The Transgender Journey of Virginia Prince. Richard F. Docter (2004) Northridge, CA: Docter Press.150 pp. ISBN: 0-97456000-0-6



I have had the pleasure of knowing both Virginia Prince and her biographer, Dick Docter, for a considerable number of years. I also know that they have a very close relationship and have been friends for a very long time. So, when I opened this biography, I was half expecting a paean of praise that would ignore blemishes and hiccups in favor or one friend praising another. I'm pleased that Doctor Docter (as many like to call him,) has not succumbed to that temptation. In fact, he has produced an authentic, readable book that has the feel of accuracy and honesty about it.

Docter begins at the beginning, with Virginia's youth as Arnold Lowman, son of Dr. Charles Lowman and Mrs. Elizabeth Hudson Lowman, even providing what background he can as to the parents' background, drawing on Virginia's extensive recorded conversations with the late Dr, Richard Stoller. From that beginning, we learn an impressive amount about Virginia's journey. I was unceasingly amazed at her courage in going out dressed, passing, and pushing the envelope at a time when even gays were deeply closeted and there were laws against crossdressing.

Across two marriages and several careers, Virginia pioneered an openness and a sense of community that had barely existed before her involvement. Her own experimentation eventually leads to the establishment of *Transvestia Magazine* in 1960. Her first organization was the Foundation for Personality Expression, or FPE, and that became, in time, the Society of the Second Self or Tri-Sigma, and, eventually, Tri-Ess. Through these organizations and publications Virginia aggressively promoted her non-sexual presentation of crossdressing and her theory of the "girl within."

I said at the beginning that Dr. Docter didn't use makeup to cover the blemishes. Virginia's personality is often acknowledged as aggressive, and her inability to tolerate conflicting views or share control is not played down. This is important, because these aspects of her nature had a definite impact on her approach, and that, in turn, impacted on the community at large. Indeed, Virginia's insistence that there was nothing inherently sexual about transvestism, despite her own definite sexuality and interest in the sexual aspects of her crossdressing, still to this day define a great deal about how we think about crossdressing. The Tri-Ess "official line" seems to continue in the "it has nothing to do with sex" approach that Virginia began.

I recommend this book to anyone interested in the history of crossdressing. It is an honest, fair, and complete story of someone who is a giant of our history and grandmother to us all.

The Twentieth Century Collection

Review by Abby Saypin

The Twentieth Century Collection: Eight Extraordinary One-Act Plays by Playwright Cheryl Ann Costa. Print on Demand (Paperback): iUniverse. ISBN 0-595-25967-7. Paperback. $14.95.

When is witchcraft not witchcraft? Why is the only survivor of an Army unit in Vietnam haunted by the ghosts of his deceased buddies? Why can't an intersexed woman gain admittance to either a monastery or a nunnery? What advice about love can a young man get from his middle-aged, thrice-divorced, double whiskey sour-drinking aunt and a middle-aged male barfly who can't stop minding their business? How does Odin affect the career of an aspiring young rock star?

There are eight of these little gems in *The Twentieth Century Collection, Eight One-Act Plays by Cheryl Ann Costa.*

In "True Magick," a smart-alecky teenage girl wants to become an apprentice to a witch who "transforms her" into the ideal daughter as the price for her apprenticeship. Fun to read.

When his aunt and a stranger give him advice on love while sitting at a bar, a young man rejects it and storms off to see his girlfriend to solve the "problem" on his own. Did the advice he rejected somehow seep into his head? You'll find out in "Never Say Yes."

In "Gadzooks and Ophelia," Gadzooks is banished from Valhalla by Odin and has to redeem himself by inspiring an outcast female art student who doesn't believe in him.

Two of the plays are outstanding—"The Ghosts of Christmas Past" and "Barbara and Diane." The former is about a man, Frank, haunted by the ghosts of his dead buddies and the pact he made with them. This play brought

tears to my eyes and sent chills up my spine. Frank, who is married and a college teacher, struggles to live his own life while his buddies want him to live theirs. Is the psychologist really his long-lost Vietnamese daughter? How can he prove to her he isn't crazy? This play is a must-read.

"Barbara and Diane," is about two women, the murderer of one of them, and how they trap him. It's funny and twisty—you don't see it coming.

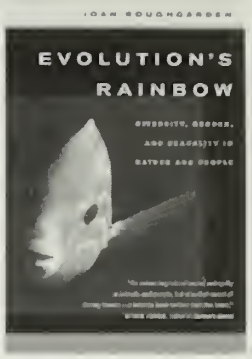
Along with reading the plays, we learn about both the plays and the process that brought them to the stage. We are given more detail than we need to know, and the book has more that its share of typos, but is still interesting reading.

How can he prove to her he isn't crazy? This play is a must-read.

Through "Princess in Training," we are given an intimate look into the process that takes one person from male to female, and become intimately acquainted with Ms. Costa's life. One of my criteria for judging a book is "Did I come away from this book a little smarter?" This time, besides the fun and pleasure of reading it, I learned a lot too.

Evolution's Rainbow

Reviewed by Dallas Denny



Evolution's Rainbow: Diversity, Gender, and Sexuality in Nature and People. Joan Roughgarden. (2004). Berkeley: University of California Press.

In 1975, when I was in graduate school at the University of Tennessee, a remarkable book was published. The title of the work was *Sociobiology: A New Synthesis.* The author was Harvard biologist E.O. Wilson. I spent an informative summer class reading and discussing with my fellow grad students this new science, this can of worms this man named Wilson had opened.

Wilson, an entomologist, drew upon not only his expertise as a student of social insects—specifically, ants—but his knowledge of evolutionary biology, behavioral biology, population biology, ecology, sociology, and genetics, weaving an astounding amount of information from these and other fields into the synthesis promised by his subtitle. Using these varied data, he built a case for the branch of science he christened sociobiology—the study of the biological basis of social behavior in animals, human and otherwise.

Sociobiology is a field not without critics; in fact, the truth or falsehood of Wilson's concepts have been and will continue to be argued with great heat by both proponents and opponents. Ultimately, sociobiology will stand or fall as it began—under the weight of accumulated data, much of it originally pulled together by Wilson to buttress his theories.

Now Berkeley ecologist Joan Roughgarden—who happens to be a transsexual woman—has brought us another synthesis of biology. In her *Evolution's Rainbow: Diversity, Gender, and Sexuality in Nature and People*, she makes a case for the proliferation in nature of a wide variety of sexual behavior, gender identities and roles, and body forms, both in animals and man.

A theme throughout Roughgarden's book, but one she hits hardest in Part I, "Animal Rainbows," is the use of language by scientists—specifically, the ways biological terms and definitions reflect the underlying social mores and beliefs of biologists and, once established, direct and limit discussion and research. She notes, for instance, that in studies of copulation in cliff swallows, male sexual partners other than the primary male partner have been called "perpetrators"; this is because the researchers viewed the male-female bond as similar to human monogamy. More than that, though, interpretations of findings are often constrained by heterosexism—the assumption that the world is entirely heterosexu-

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al and variations from this "norm" are rare and pathological. This can lead to extraordinary conceptual blindness in researchers, as Roughgarden points out. Returning to the cliff swallows, she notes that their extraordinary large numbers of male-male copulatory attempts have been described as "fights in the mud" and attributed to males being "mistaken" about the sex of the intended copulatory partner, as if they were unable to distinguish between males and females of their own species (p. 69).

Roughgarden shows us how the limiting beliefs of researchers has resulted in a view of the animal world that is based on human social systems and how in this way the lessons animals can teach us are lost. Roughgarden argues that because of these limiting assumptions biology has come to view variability as maladaptive, rather than the rainbow of evolution that is described in the main title of her book.

Roughgarden is describing a subversion of science, and alas, not one limited to biology. This sort of thing is ubiquitous in the social sciences, where it has tainted the study of everything from mental processes to transsexualism.

Part II, "Human Rainbows," extends the same sort of analysis to humans, moving from the concrete mechanisms of embryology, sex determination, and sex differences to psychology, and eventually to a speculatory and frightening chapter about genetic engineering and its inevitable future misuses. Part III has a sociological thrust, moving from a cross-cultural examination of transgender behavior to transgender politics in the U.S. This last part is followed by an appendix of recommendations for policy change in educational practices and Federal regulatory agencies.

Roughgarden, whose background is ecology, notes that as she moves from parts I to III, her grounding in education and practice moves from the expert to the tenuous. Additionally, she notes that she was under pressure from her publisher to include chapters on topics she had not initially planned to include.

> *When writing about ecology and evolution, I write as a native about my hometown. With developmental biology, I wrote about the town next door. Here [In Part III] I write as a tourist in foreign academic lands...*
>
> — *p. 330*

Roughgarden is most persuasive when she is indeed in her home territory. Her numerous examples of variant morphological types of males and females in birds and fishes (she calls these variant types "genders") make it easy to see the cultural blindness of many of the researchers who studied the species she describes, and makes it clear that Darwin's theory of sexual selection is inadequate in light of the diversity she describes. When she moves from biology to psychology and sociology, her arguments grow progressively weaker and are less supported by data.

It would have taken a much lengthier book, and a grounding in not only the town next door but those foreign academic lands, for Roughgarden to accomplish what Wilson set out to do (and did) in *Sociobiology*—but certainly, Roughgarden has provided more than sufficient information to lend credibility to her theories of functional diversity in the animal kingdom and to call into question sexual selection theory. Perhaps we will see her now turn further attention to those "foreign domestic lands" or collaborate with other scholars more familiar with those lands to shine further light on the importance of diversity of form and behavior in human evolution.

Despite the dense material, Roughgarden's style is readable, but I found irritating her use of endnotes rather than APA-style in-text notation, which gives date and authors, which can then be looked up in the bibliography. With the Chicago Style endnotes used by Roughgarden's publisher, one must either spend large amounts of time flipping pages back and forth or forego looking at citations altogether. Even though I was anxious to see the works to which she was referring, I mostly avoided the page-flipping. Most biology texts—including the work of E.O. Wilson I remember so fondly—use APA format. I wish *Evolution's Rainbow* had. *TT*

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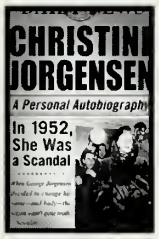

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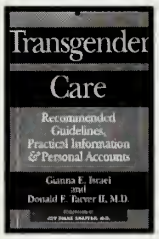

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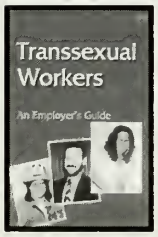

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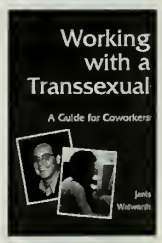

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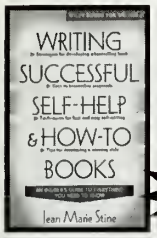

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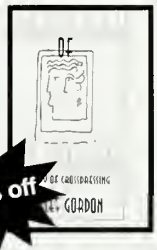

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